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International Affairs

Defense Cooperation With U.K. Stepped Up

93AS0630E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
27 Feb 93 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 26 (PTI)—India and Britain today agreed to enhance defence co-operation paving the way for joint production and marketing arrangements and assigning sub-contracts to India.

The far-reaching understanding was reached at a high level meeting the visiting British Under Secretary of Defence Lord Cranborne had with the Defence Minister Sharad Pawar.

The two countries have identified certain specific armament sub-systems for collaboration and supply by India in a sub-contracting system.

There are many countries in the Gulf and South East Asia which deploy British armaments and under the understanding, Indian units, which have better production terms would supply spares and sub-systems.

Lord Cranborne and a top level British defence industry delegation earlier visited the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited [HAL] and Bharat Electronics (BEL) at Bangalore and Bharat Dynamics at Hyderabad and assessed the production facilities and other technical capabilities for working out joint production.

Exports: Both the sides also discussed potentials for export of British armaments like the deep penetration strike aircraft Jaguar, its maritime version and other equipment being made under licence in India to third countries.

Defence sources said that during discussions, the Secretary, Defence Production and Supplies, Mr. V.K. Kapoor gave the British armament representatives an overview of various steps taken for liberalisation of economic and commercial activity in India.

Both Mr. Kapoor and the Defence Secretary, Mr. N.N. Vohra outlined the difficulties being faced by India in the acquisition of defence technology due to budgetary constraints and stressed on innovative measures to disperse the acquisition of equipment over a time frame.

The Scientific Adviser, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam while giving an overview of the Indian missile and other DRDO [Defense Research Development Organization] programmes welcomed the co-operation of British industry in the development, production and marketing of certain identified defence equipment.

The British team would be visiting Indian defence production industries round the country to explore areas of further co-operation between the two countries, the Defence Ministry sources said.

Kohl Visit, Engineering Fair Boost Bilateral Trade

93AS0628N Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
16 Feb 93 p 13

[Article by C. Chitti Pantulu]

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 15—German investments in India, presently amounting to just about Rs [Rupees] 86 crore, are expected to get a fillip with the visit by the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl coupled with the impetus resulting from the high profile Indian Engineering Trade Fair (IETF), presently on in the capital.

The German Chancellor, who will be reaching here on Thursday, is coming to receive the Jawaharlal Nehru award for international peace for 1990, has also a heavy economic agenda on his schedule.

The emphasis on furthering economic ties between the two countries is evident from the high-level delegation of the Treuhandanstalt, a public trust authority responsible for privatisation of firms and property in Germany, is already in town to participate in the IETF.

The delegation, accompanied by the German Minister for Economics Dr. Heinrich L. Kolb, is expected to lay the groundwork for several agreements for tie-ups and collaborations between German and Indian companies.

Notwithstanding the fact that a fast track facility has been established to facilitate German investment in India, there has not been much interest from German business in India.

While this could be attributed to the political and economic events in Germany, this is expected change following the Chancellor's visit and the discussions between Indian businessmen and the German delegation.

The reforms programme undertaken by the Indian Government has at the same time caught the eye of the German businessmen who are scouting around for low-cost and efficient production bases outside Europe.

Increasing competition with the European Community and the rising production costs at home are forcing German companies to look around for alternatives and India appears the gateway to Asia for the German businessmen.

However, there is an emphasis on continuing with the reforms and conforming to the IMF and World Bank prescriptions as was stated by Dr. Kolb.

The reforms, he said, had removed the hurdles, mostly the administrative problems and red tape, to German investment in India.

While this remains so, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit will be a fillip to Indo-German bilateral ties in the various fields.

Apart from the business delegation which is already in town, Mr Kohl is accompanied by 25 special invitees who include the Vice President of the German Bundestag and other representatives of German multinational companies.

Apart from holding discussions with the Prime Minister Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao and the President Mr Shankar Dayal Sharma, who hosts a lunch for him, the German Chancellor will also be meeting leading Indian businessmen.

Mr Kohl is accompanied by 25 special guests who include the vice president of the German Bundestag and representatives of some German multinational companies.

This is the third time that he comes to India while the Indian Prime Minister had met him in Germany in 1991. Mr Kohl was to come to India earlier in October but had to postpone his visit following the developments in the EC and the Ayodhya incident here in India.

Kohl for Bilateral Solution to Kashmir Row

*93AS0628C Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
23 Feb 93 p 9*

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 22—Germany favoured a bilateral settlement of the Kashmir issue, preferably under the framework of the Simla Accord, Germany Chancellor Helmut Kohl said here today.

Addressing an hour long press conference at the end of his four-day trip to the country, Dr Kohl ruled out outside intervention in the problem, and said "the need of the hour is a peaceful solution which has to be essentially found bilaterally."

On the nuclear issue, the German leader said that while the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] was of enormous importance, India's reservations against the treaty are understandable in the light of the regional situation.

"Though I would like to advocate such an agreement, Germany at the same time is willing to work towards eliminating India's reservations against the NPT, the signing of which however will be no precondition to Indo-German ties," Dr Kohl said.

Except for a bad throat and the cold weather, the German Chancellor said the visit was extremely good and the talks were held in an atmosphere of friendliness. "We are ready to assume our responsibility and take every step to extend our cooperation with India," though there are several tasks to be fulfilled in the former Eastern Germany, Dr Kohl said.

Festival: "While our economic and political relations steam ahead, cultural ties will have to remain in the foreground of our ties and for this purpose, Germany

will be holding a cultural festival in 1995 in India, similar to the one held by India in Germany sometime back," he said.

Citing the German unification and developments in erstwhile U.S.S.R. as reasons for reduced German aid to India, Chancellor Kohl, however, clarified that Germany has assumed responsibility for the former U.S.S.R. and Eastern Germany, he said.

On the flow of German investment, Dr Kohl said "There are no guarantees on German investment and I have not come here to provide any," considering the shaky economy back home. "However, I have no doubt that this will come about particularly in the communications areas like telecom, transport and others."

Citing agreements by conglomerates such as Bosch, Siemens and ABB, the Chancellor said the economic liberalisation programme will help in further German investments.

Internal Affairs

Editorial Views Rao's Intentions in Reposting Pawar

93AS0666A Varanasi AJ in Hindi 5 Mar 93 p 6

[Editorial: "In the Name of Stability"]

[Text] P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Congress (I) president and our prime minister, decided to give Maharashtra's government to Sharad Pawar after discussing with his close associates so that he could end the political instability in Bombay caused by the riots. Pawar may have been forced to accept this decision because he is being asked to end instability. The Congress (I) legislative group of the state had already authorized the prime minister to appoint a leader; however, pro-Pawar lawmakers are not happy with this decision to send the defense minister from Delhi to Bombay as the chief minister. Even though Mr. Rao is happy that Pawar accepted his decision like a good soldier, we cannot say that this action will reinstate stability in Maharashtra and control the internal strife within the Maharashtra Congress which has reached the point of rebellion. This kind of step is not new in the Congress (I) political system. All prime ministers from Nehru to Rajiv Gandhi have imposed central government people as chief ministers in various states to protect their own interests but in the name of protection of party, state, or nation. Prime Minister Rao has not done anything contrary to the party's traditions. There was no person in Maharashtra Congress (I) legislative group who could be considered a good replacement for Sudhakar Rao Naik. It is true that Sharad Pawar is an effective and able leader and he has a good grasp on the situation in his home state. However, it is not the political instability that was behind the decision to return him to Bombay. None of the Congress prime ministers hesitated in taking such actions to clear their own paths, and Rao is no

exception. Ever since Narasimha Rao became the prime minister, it was said that the country has gotten an experienced prime minister who might be able to steer the nation in the right direction by using strategies employed by Nehru or Indira or his own. It is an unfortunate political irony that Narasimha Rao has failed to establish himself either as the prime minister or as the party president.

It is no secret why Sharad Pawar was brought to the Center. First, he wanted to keep Bombay in his control even when he was in Delhi. He had the delusion that Sudhakar Rao Naik was his own person. Mr. Naik was not his opponent; however, the whole scenario changed and all equations were modified after the two grisly riots in Bombay. Naik acted in retaliation when Sharad's supporters demanded his resignation, and ousted six pro-Pawar cabinet members. In addition, in the hope of getting Narasimha Rao's support, he openly announced dissension from Sharad Pawar. Rao must have been pleased by Naik's action, however, he was forced to change his strategy because of the resolution passed in the Congress Working Committee. Rao has not forgotten that Sharad Pawar had come to Delhi with the hope of becoming the prime minister by forming various alliances. Sharad Pawar was one of the possible nominees for prime minister when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. The second challenger was Arjun Singh. It is true that unlike Arjun Singh, Pawar never opposed Rao openly, however, Rao was not unaware of the dialogue going on between Arjun Singh and Pawar. It was difficult for Rao to fight on both fronts, therefore, he was looking for an opportunity to isolate Arjun Singh in this anti-prime minister campaign. Consequently, Rao supporters would be able to defeat an isolated Arjun Singh. The politics of 10 Janpath also helped in Pawar's dispatch to Bombay. The 10 Janpath politics did not tolerate Pawar at the Center. Prime Minister Rao had increased his visits to Sonia's court since Arjun Singh had become active.

The observers that Rao had sent to Maharashtra had indicated that Sudhakar Rao should stay Maharashtra's chief minister at least until the budget session, however, Sharad Pawar and his supporters were adamant that either Home Minister S.B. Chavan or Naik should be declared responsible for the deaths in the Bombay riots. One of these had to go. This obstinacy surprised the prime minister. On 18 February, Sharad Pawar hinted that if one of these people were not removed he would resign. Earlier on 15 February, Defense Minister Sharad Pawar had a secret meeting with Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh for about one hour. He also talked with Chandra Shekhar, the former prime minister, on 16 February. Prime Minister Rao became watchful when he learned about the secret meeting with Chandra Shekhar. It is a known fact that Arjun Singh now makes most of his decisions after consulting with Chandra Shekhar. This was clear when Chandra Shekhar and Arjun Singh had offered their assistance to the anti-Jayoti Basu campaign in West Bengal. The prime minister could not tolerate Pawar's joining these two

"lions." The significance of these secret meetings was increased because of the upcoming Congress (I) high command meeting on 27-28 March. Thus, it became imperative that Sharad be kicked back to Bombay. It is important to know here that even though Sharad Pawar had accepted the prime minister's decision, his supporters including Trade Minister Pranab Mukherji asked the prime minister to reconsider his decision. Not only this, Arjun Singh, the human resources development minister and the leader of the anti-Rao campaign, was unhappy with this decision. He publicly announced that he was not consulted about the decisions related to Maharashtra. It is clear that this action taken in the name of stability will lead to some interesting development during the Congress (I) High Command meeting.

Kashmir: Protective Zone for Pandits Promised

93AS0628F Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
2 Mar 93 p 10

[Text] New Delhi—A separate zone for Kashmiri Pandits would be demarcated in the Valley, if necessary, so that they would be fully protected, Home Minister S.B. Chavan said in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Expressing concern over the fleeing of three lakh Kashmir Pandits from the Valley, he said that while the government was prepared to give them a special zone, it would be preferable if they decided where they wanted to go. "We will give them protection," he declared.

Replying to the debate on the official resolution to extend Governor's Rule in Kashmir by another six months from March 3, Mr Chavan announced that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has been asked to set up a special cell to counter Pakistan's disinformation campaign on Kashmir.

The support for India's stand expressed recently by British Prime Minister John Major, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was an indication of the country's successful diplomatic efforts on the Kashmir issue, he said.

The Home Minister said that if a solution to the Kashmir issue could be found, the Centre was not averse to giving greater autonomy to the state, adding that the Kashmir government had been asked to submit a final proposal to solve the problem. The Centre, he said, was sympathetic to the demands of districts like Ladakh and Kargil for greater autonomy.

Calling for a national consensus on the Kashmir issue, he said the Centre had written to the leaders of all political parties to discuss the issue.

On the controversy over the destruction of temples the Home Minister said that not more than two or three temples had been destroyed. "The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is trying to justify the demolition at Ayodhya (by raising this matter)," he said.

The Home Minister said he was not averse to conducting talks with militants provided they agreed to abjure violence and to abide by the Indian Constitution. However, there were so many militant organisations in the Valley that it was difficult to know with whom to conduct talks.

Ruling out the abrogation of Article 370, as demanded by the Bharatiya Janata Party, Mr Chavan said it was not proper to make such a demand when India was fighting a proxy war with Pakistan and when militants were being supplied arms by Pakistan. Article 370 was the main link that Kashmir had with the Centre, he emphasised.

Mr Chavan assured the people of Kashmir that free and fair elections would be held in the state, and appealed to all political parties to start political activity there so that elections could be held.

Decrying the Sopore incident in which security forces had retaliated after two jawans were killed, Mr Chavan said that appropriate steps would be taken against those who had indulged in excesses.

Maharashtra: Pawar As Chief Minister Said Good Choice

93AS06281 *Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English*
5 Mar 93 p 8

[Text] The choice of Mr Sharad Pawar as the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra has greatly brightened the prospects of an early restoration of the state's stability. No other leader of the state Congress is competent enough to clean up the unprecedented mess caused by the gross ineptitude of the then Chief Minister, Mr Sudhakar Naik, in dealing with the post-Ayodhya riots in Bombay in December and January. This is an overriding objective, especially since the complete break-down at that time of the administrative machinery in the country's financial capital, seems even to have discouraged foreign investors initially attracted by the on-going economic liberalisation. The crisis in the Maharashtra Congress precipitated by Mr Sudhakar Naik was thus one which involved vital national interests. It follows that in overcoming it, the Central party leadership should give the highest priority to the task of repairing the grave damage done to Bombay and indeed the western coastal region itself as the hub of India's economic regeneration. It is, therefore, just as well that Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, the party President and Prime Minister, succeeded in persuading Mr Pawar to give up the key portfolio of defence at the Centre and shoulder the new heavy responsibility as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Mr Rao would have been guilty of a major political blunder if he had rested content with trying to patch up the faction-ridden state Congress in the all-too-familiar manner.

The departure of Mr Pawar from the national nerve centre has, however, raised another crucial issue. In the absence of one whose advice on vital policy questions could not be lightly brushed aside by the Prime Minister,

will decision-making now be much less democratic? Will authoritarian trends, already seen in the functioning of the Prime Minister's office, now be reinforced? These questions are pertinent because most ministers, barring Mr Arjun Singh who has been operating on a wavelength different from that of Mr Rao, are essentially yes men. Mr Pawar did command due regard for his views, welcome or otherwise, to the Prime Minister.

In a country where even a minor change in the ministry at the Centre or any of the states tends unduly to disturb existing power equations, so significant a shift as has involved Mr Sharad Pawar, one of the recognised heavy-weights of the ruling party, has naturally triggered a rare flutter in the various lobbies feverishly at work in New Delhi. His staunch supporters in the party made no secret of their disappointment at what they were apt to view as their patron's demotion. Mr Rao, who is aware of such sensitivities, has tried to give solace to them by sweet words. The Prime Minister sought to cheer up Mr Pawar himself by saying that he looked forward "to his continuing role as a valued and trusted colleague at the national level." Mr Pawar, in any case, is not the sort to be so disheartened by this turn of events as to give up his Prime Ministerial ambition.

Rao Move to Send Pawar to Bombay Questioned

93AS0668B *New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi* 8 Mar 93
p 6

[Article by Prabhaskar Joshi: "How do the Signs Look?"]

[Text] Sharad Pawar's return to Bombay is being billed as something arranged by Saturn. Bombay newspapers are educating those who are not aware of Saturn's ways. What is 7 1/2 and what is 2 1/2? It does not matter whether one believes in Indian astrology, it is not possible for anyone not to have heard about the effects of Saturn. People may not believe in it, but they do know that Saturn causes sinister things to happen. This information is not received from news or the astrology column published in these papers, or in astrology books. It is learned from folklore and through prevalent beliefs. Experiences of several generations are summed up in such information. It does not matter whether one suffers one's own karmas, the sufferers connect it with some power that they cannot control. Whatever good happens to us, we consider it a result of our good deeds; however, whatever bad happens to us is considered to be caused by Saturn.

You wonder why we talk about Saturn on the Holi festival? Why do we not associate it with Krishna who drenched his girlfriends with color in Vrindavan. Let us also think about Sharad Pawar, Sudhakar Rao Naik, and Narasimha Rao. Did Saturn put its evil eye on their Holi? Had Saturn not been in the wrong place, Sudhakar Rao Naik would not have issued the statement about ejecting Sharad Pawar from the party! If Saturn was not angry at Sharad Pawar, Narasimha Rao would never have asked Sharad to return to Bombay and straighten

things out. Otherwise Shanker Rao Chavan would have been sent in his place. If Saturn were not so active in politics, Narasimha Rao, who was so inactive for six hours after Babri Masjid was torn down, would not have become so active in the Maharashtra issue.

Since the influence of Saturn is considered unholy, Narasimha Rao will have to suffer the consequence of what he has done to Sharad Pawar. All those despondent people who failed to become cabinet members could not get a high position or are visualizing the ship of Congress sinking under Narasimha Rao's leadership as well as those who do not like to remain in a party that is not running the government, believe in this possibility. All these people have joined forces and are trying to convince Arjun Singh that, if he does not act soon, Narasimha will treat him the same way as he has treated Sharad Pawar. Arjun Singh cannot be sent back as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh because we have president's rule there, the vidhan sabha has been dismissed, and Kanwar Sahib is unable to run the government even with everyone's advice. Arjun Singh cannot be sent to Madhya Pradesh as its governor because of the tradition of not appointing anyone governor of his state of birth.

Kalapanath Ray had proposed in a cabinet meeting that Arjun Singh be made Uttar Pradesh' governor. However, those at the meeting burst out in laughter at this suggestion. We do not know whether the idea of Arjun Singh's becoming the governor was funny or it was Kalapanath who had made this suggestion that was funny. However, a good and sage suggestion was ignored in this laughter. Rajiv Gandhi had sent Arjun Singh to Chandigarh as Punjab's governor to save the state from terrorism and separatism. A few months later, the Punjab agreement was signed and elections were held there. Arjun Singh had returned to Delhi after establishing Surjeet Singh Barnala as the chief minister of Punjab. What happened after the Punjab agreement is still stuck like a peacock's feather in Arjun Singh's crown.

At that time, Punjab was the nation's main Kurukshetra [epic battle ground] and Rajiv Gandhi had delegated Arjun Singh to replace Singh there. Now the Kurukshetra of our nation is Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The war in this Kurukshetra is against communal hatred and Arjun Singh is an expert warrior in this area. Therefore, his appointment as the governor in Lucknow to establish secularism and reinstate the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh will not be a lesser job than winning the war of Mahabharata. Kalapanath Rai was right in stating in the cabinet meeting that Arjun Singh is the Congress Party's troubleshooter, and he should be sent to Uttar Pradesh to resolve the conflict there. Either they have failed to realize Arjun Singh's ability as a troubleshooter or they thought that Kalapanath Rai was being funny. Anyhow, the danger is still there, Arjun Singh is still in Delhi with little to do most of the time, and Satyanarayan Reddy must be removed from Lucknow. In other words, Arjun Singh still can be appointed the governor of Uttar Pradesh.

However, we have to see if Saturn has its [evil] eye aimed at Arjun Singh. Until now, we have noticed that only V.P. Narasimha Rao's eye is on him. Some people infer from what happened to Sharad Pawar that the Saturn that Sudhakar Rao Naik had referred to in Bombay is not the lame, clothed-in-black Saturn that rides a bison; this Saturn is a planet sitting in Delhi that wants to become the Sun. The observers who are ignorant about the movement of stars believe that his planet is Narasimha Rao himself. However, here we have to get god's incarnation from a stake from Holika to give birth to Prahalad, and join man [nar] with lion [singh]. Second, it would be undemocratic to call the prime minister a reincarnation of Narsingh. Saturn does not have the same position among the known planets as do Chankya and Machiavelli in the scriptures of democracy!

If you want to congratulate Narasimha Rao on his political shrewdness, if you believe that he sent Sharad Pawar to Bombay to neutralize a rival, and if you believe that he is working on taking care of Arjun Singh, then do not call him Saturn. Being a Joshi or an astrologer, I know a little bit about astrology. Saturn has never been known as a sly, shrewd, and sharp planet of political savvy. The Great Saturn does make problems for people. It will really ruin a person it is after regardless of how much oil and iron is donated to keep him away. It is not necessary for a person that causes pain to others to be also sly. If you want to call Narasimha Rao a sharp political player, you can say that he has gotten Indira Gandhi's brain. We have never read any story in any scripture or heard from a story-telling aunt that Saturn neutralizes everyone by having plants, gods, and demons fight among themselves. It was Lord Karishan who practiced a sharper and higher form of politics than even Chankya and Machiavelli. He enjoyed participating in the Holi activities. Narasimha Rao does not have the qualities of being a fan of Holi festival, therefore, he cannot practice the Karishan brand of politics.

It is possible that Saturn has its evil eye on Narasimha Rao just like it has it on Sharad Pawar and Arjun Singh. Some people even insist on this possibility. Why did all this happen in Ayodhya after 6 December if this is not true? Why did he dismiss three BJP state governments and impose a ban on all RSS family parties except his favorite princess, the BJP? Why did he announce that he will rebuild the destroyed mosque? Later, he said that he made all those decision under pressure from Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar. In other words, Saturn's evil eye definitely was on him also. Here, we cannot call these both Saturn since Saturn has only one mount. Therefore, we have to concede that Saturn influenced Narasimha Rao through another medium. It is believed that P.C. Alexander, Maharashtra's governor, is Mr. Rao's closest advisor, and he has not gone to Bombay to understand the riots in Bombay but to consult with Mr. Alexander about what changes to make in the central cabinet. However, it does not seem possible for Saturn to pick Alexander as the medium. The qualities that are

required for Saturn's medium are not found in any leader or bureaucrat. Who the medium is for Saturn for affecting our prime minister is a subject for research. I am going to remain quiet until an investigating journalist provides me with solid information about it.

The people still say that Narasimha Rao had made the decision to send Sharad Pawar to Bombay under Saturn's influence. However, by this action, he did not only send away a supporter but also left one of his sides unprotected from attacks. One observer believes that Sharad Pawar the defense minister was defending Narasimha Rao. Now that he has gone to Bombay, Narasimha Rao will be an easy target for Arjun's arrows. If Mr. Rao tried to deal with Arjun Singh under the influence of Saturn, both of them can join forces to put him under Saturn's evil influence for 7 1/2 years. It would be almost impossible for Narasimha Rao to save his throne if Saturn turns his evil eye on him. However, can Saturn also unite Sharad Pawar and Arjun Singh? Some wise persons believe that this would happen only when Saturn's eye is more negative on them. Both of them will not be able to remove Rao, and even if they are able to do so then they will fall out when they try to decide who will become the prime minister. Sharad Pawar can still say that he has the support of 30-40 Lok Sabha members. How many does Arjun Singh have? Therefore, if Saturn has the evil eye on all three of them, Sharad Pawar and Arjun Singh will join forces. If the evil eye is on these three, it is believed that this evil eye will not be aimed at Lal Karishan Advani. However, the official astrologer of the BJP says that there is a dearth of people around Lal Karishan Advani who can be mediums for Saturn.

The evil eye of Saturn can affect Narasimha Rao through his son who is believed to have borrowed 20 million rupees from Hiten Dalal. Saturn has used sons as mediums to affect many leaders of this country. The recent example is Tau Devlal. Indira Gandhi is a classical example of this tendency of Saturn. If Mr. Rao is affected through his son, then it will not matter how much oil and iron he donates, his future does not look very bright. Mr. Rao can be helped if Harshad Mehta practices some religious rite for him. Some more help can come from Chandraswami's tantras. However, we do not hear any stories of Chandraswami and Narasimha being close now. Another path could be shown by Manmohan Singh. The same way he covered the securities scandal through his economic plan, he can take care of Hiten Dalal's 20 million rupees loan. If Narasimha Rao desires he can ask for Arjun Singh's help, who can get blessings of Mauni Baba.

Sudhakar Rao Naik has blamed the lose of his throne on Saturn's movement from one zodiac to another. However, he threw in many people who were worshipping Lord Ganesh under Saturn's influence. Stories of Saturn's war with other leaders have been told, but I am not aware if Saturn ever confronted Ganesh. It is said that gloom-removing and happiness-giving Ganesh used to make problems in the beginning. However, he was satisfied when he was designed as the first one to be

worshipped. He decided to make every project that was started with his worship to be successful. If a trouble-maker can change into a problemsolver after he is worshipped, we should start the tradition of worshipping Saturn also. It is important for this country's politics that Saturn begin to behave like Ganesh. Who should we contact to start this tradition? Should we ask Sharad Pawar or Narasimha Rao?

Maharashtra Chief Minister Naik Resigns

93AS0636A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 23 Feb 93 p 1

[Article by Subhash Kirpekar]

[Text] New Delhi, February 22—Mr. Sudhakar Rao Naik resigned tonight as the chief minister of Maharashtra. He tendered his letter of resignation to the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, with whom he had a 40-minute meeting. Mr. Naik's letter is not addressed to the Congress president but to the governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P.C. Alexander.

Mr. Naik told this correspondent after his meeting with Mr. Rao late tonight: "I have resigned. The Prime Minister asked me to resign and I have done so." Mr. Naik did not stay in Maharashtra Sadan, as is customary, when he arrived in New Delhi today on being summoned by Mr. Rao, but instead spent the evening in the SICOM [expansion not given] guest house at Hailey Road, waiting for a call from the Prime Minister's residence. He was accompanied by his wife but not a single minister, MP [Member of Parliament] or MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] was by his side. Before going to meet the Prime Minister, he appeared crest-fallen and forlorn. He had a brief meeting with Mr. Jitendra Prasad, the political secretary to the Congress president, at the guest house before the two left to meet Mr. Rao.

Mr. Naik's exit is a political victory for the defence minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar. When asked if this would not be the general talk in political circles, Mr. Naik philosophically said: "so be it."

"I feel free now," he said when asked for his response after his resignation. Mr. Naik said he would continue to work as an MLA. He did not make any comment about Mr. Pawar or for that matter about any leader.

According to Mr. Naik, the meeting of the legislature Congress party (CLP), would be held after February 25 when the BJP has resolved to defy the ban on the proposed rally in New Delhi. The AICC [All India Congress Committee] observers would attend that meeting which would choose a new CLP leader who would become the chief minister.

"I gave no indication of who should be next chief minister," Mr. Naik said when asked if he had been asked by the Prime Minister to have a possible successor.

Till the CLP meeting is held and his successor is chosen, Mr. Naik will continue as the caretaker chief minister of Maharashtra.

TOINS adds from Bombay: Earlier the chief minister, Mr. Sudhakar Naik, airdashed to New Delhi today, after canceling his visit to Pune.

The Congress spokesman, Mr. Chandulal Chandrakar, told newsmen in New Delhi today that the AICC observers—Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, Mr. G.K. Moopanar and Mr. N.D. Tiwari—had presented their report about the situation in the state to Mr. Rao, last night.

The Prime Minister held consultations with senior leaders to resolve the issue.

The central leadership was "unhappy" over the statement made by Mr. Naik against the defence minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, demanding his expulsion from the party.

Beant's Rule: Peace Marks Anniversary in Punjab
93AS0628E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Feb 93 p 8

[Article by B.K. Chum]

[Text] Chandigarh—The first year of the Beant Singh Ministry—it assumed office on February 25, 1992—has proved to be a watershed in the decade-old blood-spattered history of the militancy hit Punjab.

What has made the event significant is the new hope that the year has generated among the hapless people of the State. They no longer fear the sudden emergence of AK-47 wielding militants in the crowded bazars of the cities, in trains or in buses and firing bursts from their deadly weapons instantly killing innocent men, women and children.

Roads in the cities and small towns no longer get deserted at night. Villagers no longer bolt themselves in their houses after sundown. They now seldom get midnight knocks which used to send shivers down their spines. There are hardly any reports of the militants calling on industrialists for extortion or for protection money.

The political parties are also back in action. They are holding mass contact campaigns. The mainstream Akali Dal (Badal) has planned a big demonstration at Jalandhar on March 14 against the police "excesses" and for demanding "justice" for Punjab. The left parties have also planned an action programme for pressing the Government to solve the political problem of Punjab in order to consolidate the gains of the anti-militancy drive and to get justice for the State.

The Method

The Government's writ has started running and near normalcy has returned in the once militant-infested

areas, particularly the border districts, where Government officials had not been attending to their duties and no development works were taking place.

This changed scenario has resulted from the Beant Singh Ministry's single-point programme which it decided to adopt after assuming office. It was to fight militancy by treating Punjab as a solely law and order problem and by giving full freedom to the security forces to deal with the militants. This freedom established a single-line command in the security forces headed by Mr. K.P.S. Gill, now regarded as one of India's best operational cops.

Apart from pursuing vigorously the single-point programme which has led to a sea-change in the security environment in the last one year, another important factor which has brought about a qualitative change in the situation is the restoration of democracy at the grassroots level by holding elections to the municipal committees and the panchayats which had remained under bureaucratic control for over a decade.

The turnout of voters in the two elections itself demonstrated the people's longing for normalcy and peace and their rejection of the militants. In the municipal elections over 65 per cent of the State's urban population exercised their right of franchise while in the panchayat elections the voting was over 82 per cent, a record in the State's history.

This was in sharp contrast to the polling figure of less than 24 per cent in the February, 1992 Assembly elections which resulted in the victory of the Congress and the formation of the Beant Singh Ministry with the support of only about 10 per cent of the electorate. Although the Beant Singh Ministry still carries the stigma of not representing the overwhelming majority of the people of the State, it is no longer viewed as such by the people, mainly for vastly improving the security environment and reviving the democratic institutions at the grassroots level.

New Problems

Notwithstanding the achievements of the Ministry, it also has quite a few dark spots as also new problems it is confronted with. The biggest negative development has been unprecedented powers the police have now, in practice, come to wield. Their misuse in the form of excesses and extortions has caused resentment, particularly in parts of rural Punjab. At certain places, mass protests in the form of spontaneous dharnas and demonstrations have been organised against the police excesses.

Lawyers in the State are up in arms demanding the "production" of an advocate, his wife and their child who were allegedly picked up and shot by the police. The authorities, however, claim that they were shot dead by the lawyer's militant friends.

As, and if, complete normalcy returns to Punjab, the question that will confront the Government would be

what to do with the large police force the State has now come to have as also the top-heavy police hierarchy. Retrenchment of a section of home guards and special police officers recruited for the security of VIPs has already led to muted protests.

Another problem is the corruption at the ministerial level. Official sources have often hinted at the possibility of Mr. Beant Singh taking action against some of the Ministers. But nothing has materialised so far. Apparently, the Chief Minister does not want to open a new front in his party in view of the muted voices of dissidence that are occasionally raised.

The third major problem the Ministry faces is the acute resource crisis. Although the hike in bus and power rates will yield about Rs [Rupees] 400 crore in a full year, it will not help implement the annual Plan of Rs 1,150 crore. While, on the one side, the Government talks of economy in expenditure, on the other it has not shown any lack of generosity in providing sops to ministers and legislators as also to the huge army of government employees.

Now the Government has mounted added pressure on the Centre for overcoming the State's financial problems, failing which it fears the improved situation will be adversely affected. Unless development works are taken up on a large scale, it is argued, the gains of the anti-militancy drive cannot be consolidated.

Jayalalitha's Wealth Doubled Since Assuming Office

93AS0628B Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
24 Feb 93 p 17

[Text] Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha's wealth has more than doubled since she assumed office as per the returns she had declared with the income tax department.

Minister of State for Finance M.V. Chandrasekara Murthy told Janata Party member Subramaniam Swamy in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha that her wealth which was around Rs 2.6 crore in 1991-92 had touched nearly Rs 5.81 crore during 1992-93.

Her total income during 1992-93 was around Rs 6.64 lakh and agricultural income was Rs 9.50 lakh.

He said the Chief Minister did not file returns of income and wealth within the statutory time limit for the assessment year 1990-91. Notices had been issued to regularise these returns.—UNI

Janata Dal Said Demanding Reservations For Muslims

93AS0666D New Delhi *JANSATTA* in Hindi 2 Mar 93
p 7

[News Report: "Janata Dal Demanding Reservations for Muslims"]

[Text] New Delhi, 1 March. The Janata Dal leadership has demanded that Muslims be given reserved quotas of government jobs. The demand was made in the Lok Sabha. Those who made this demand were thanking the president for his speech. All speakers attacked the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] family very strongly. The debate will continue today.

The debate over the resolution of thanks was opened by Digvijay Singh of the Congress Party. The president's address usually defines government policies. Therefore, defense of the government by Digvijay Singh, who is a close associate of Arjun Singh, is understandable. In addition to him, Mani Shankar Ayyar (Congress), Chanderjit Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan (Janata Dal), and Loknath Choudhary (CPI), took part in the debate.

Digvijay Singh suggested amending the laws to ban participation in the elections in the name of religion and caste. He criticized the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and also made recommendations for his own party. He called all secular groups to unite against factionalist forces. He said that the Supreme Court should make the decision to build a mosque and a temple at Ayodhya. The Nirmohi group had raised this temple issue first, but the government did not pay heed to it. The government should ignore the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and talk directly to Nirmohi group. He also demanded that a white paper be issued against the RSS. He demanded that the RSS which calls itself a social organization should be charge sheeted for all its actions starting from Mahatma Gandhi's assassination to what happened on 6 December.

The Congress Party lawmaker said that the related laws needed to be overhauled. He said that no poor person can expect fair treatment in the present legal system. The right to appeal should be limited to one time only. He asked the government to make a decision on Chandigarh soon and implement the Rajiv-Langowal agreement. He accused the security forces in Kashmir of committing atrocities on the people. He said that the advisory board was not being contacted for advice. He emphasized the need for political action in Kashmir. He congratulated George Varghese for revealing facts about temple destruction in Kashmir. He revealed that Rajiv Gandhi had sent Makhanlal Fotedar with a billion rupees to help rebuild the demolished temples. Ram Naik (BJP) commented that many temples must have been demolished since it cost one billion rupees to repair them. Anil Basu (CPM [Communist Party of India]) countered Naik, however, Digvijay Singh did not respond.

Digvijay Singh also expressed apprehension about the aborigines tribes' taking up arms if their demands were not met. He said that the demand for Jharkhand was made a lot earlier than the one for Bodoland. The government should pay attention to the needs of the smaller states. He said that money under the Jawahar Employment Plan should not be sent to areas where there is a shortage of laborers. This money should be sent

to the areas from which laborers are migrating. Deputations of lawmakers should be sent to inspect the distribution system and work plans.

The Congress lawmaker said that the accusation against the prime minister that he procrastinates on decisions and has some agreement with the BJP is false. Janata Dal's Mohan Singh said that this accusation was levied by a fellow Congressite Arjun Singh. Mani Shankar Ayyar (Congress) demanded that the prime minister announce soon that six percent of total GNP would be spent on education. He blamed the national front for making the BJP strong.

Chanderjit Yadav (Janata Dal) complained that the president's address did not explain the present critical situation. He called the BJP and RSS group not only factionalists but also fascists. Mr. Yadav said that our nation was 146th in personal income now, and 125,000 engineers and 40,000 medical doctors were unemployed. He said that two-thirds of our population is below poverty level. The government should reconsider its employment policy, otherwise democracy would be useless. He asked the government to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations. The government should start a campaign for 10 years and provide 27 percent quota of jobs for the backward classes.

Mr. Yadav said that the backward classes make up 52 percent of the population but hold only four percent of the jobs. The Muslims, who are 12-13 percent of the population, hold only 1.5 percent of the jobs. They should have fair representation in employment. It was Ram Vilas Paswan, however, who directly demanded that jobs be reserved for the Muslims. He said that he was asking the House to reserve seven percent of the jobs for the people who make up 16 percent of the population.

Mr. Paswan attacked the Congress as well as the BJP. He alleged that the government had failed in being secular and providing social justice. After the 6 December incident, we still may call ourselves proud Indians abroad, but we cannot call ourselves secular. He strongly criticized the ban imposed on the BJP rally for 25 February. He said that if the government could impose BSF [Border Security Force] and CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] on 25 February, it could also have used water jet streams and plastic bullets on 6 December. The government, he said, must have had different plans. The Congress Party first had the doors unlocked and then had the statue installed. Now the mosque is destroyed and the government is going to build the temple also!

The Janata Dal leader said that the Muslim youth in our country are restless and are cursing their old leadership. The government itself has accused the foreign powers of being active here. The Hindus and Muslims are together in every village and every street. To how many places can be the government send troops if something goes wrong? We used to accuse the prime minister for not being secular, and since the Congress is defending him now, I

would say that the whole Congress Party is not secular. Mr. Paswan asked why Sharad Pawar and P.V. Narasimha Rao were afraid to say anything against Bal Thakre. He accused the government of being timid.

Mr. Paswan demanded that reservations be implemented through the constitution instead of advertising, jailing delinquents for six months, and including the reservations issue in the 9th list of the constitution in order to avoid litigations. Loknath Choudhary of the CPI said that the new economic policy would destroy the achievements made until now. He said that the prime minister was not betrayed in Ayodhya; the prime minister betrayed the nation!

Leftists Seen Bankrupt, Ineffective

93AS0674G Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
2 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Manas Bakshi: "Left Logic: No Prospects of Alternative Line"]

[Text] The aftermath of Ayodhya has whipped up once again the question of providing an alternative to—and not a replacement for—the ruling party to ward off the menace of the Hindutva wave—capitalized on by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The question is whether a Left alternative is possible nationally? The Left is divided on ideological issues and tactical questions, while sections have totally deviated from Leftist ideology. Ardent advocates of the Marxist-leninist line have not been able to develop a fruitful political approach to combat the present crisis, or the Right-wing authoritarianism and bourgeois landlordism and capitalism.

A possibility of a Left Democratic unity to combat communalism has been discussed, with some even expressing a desire to join hands with Congress on this issue. This is so because a vast majority of the working people and petty bourgeois, both in rural and urban sectors, has not yet been politicized. As long as mass mobilization is confined to regional or peripheral issues, such problems will remain.

Recall History

When the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India], the main and most vocal force of Left politics in India, harps on Left Democratic unity, it is important to remember the factors involved in the CPI split in 1964—Chinese aggression of October 1962, the 20th CPSU [expansion not given] Congress, and the debate between the National Democratic Revolution and the People's Democratic Revolution, as also the use of parliamentary democracy. Two of these factors—the first and the fourth came up when the CPI(M) was divided, giving birth to the CPI(ML) [Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)].

The Marxist line can work only when it is appropriately applied. It is not possible to provide a meaningful

alternative with one or two Left parties,—in West Bengal, a Tripura and Kerala. The issue of Left Democratic unity as a viable national alternative may also give rise to the question: what is Left in this so-called “Left?” Or for that matter who will determine the character of the new Left. If the running of a State Government under the facade of Marxism resembles Leftism, perhaps the Congress(I) has been closer to the term “Left.”

Neither the CPI(M) nor any of its allies is destined to alter the electoral process of parliamentary democracy. As part of the system in a State like West Bengal, it has accepted the politics of compromise which admits “bourgeois vices.” E.M.S. Namboodiripad’s reply to the CPI’s Bhatinda congress resolution shows how the “right reactionary” CPI, which has been for long the cat’s paw of Congress(I) and maintained only “Congress-Communist Unity,” became reformist overnight. Such alliance practised on the basis of “as and where” poll strategy is only political opportunism.

Much alternative politics degenerates into the Left forces criticizing and taking advantage of the loopholes and failures of one bourgeois party in confrontation with another. Since 1973 a two-party system has come to the fore both at the Centre and at State levels. That was between the Congress(I) and Janata. The Left have had enough opportunity since 1977 to involve people in the potentially alternative politics at the national level, but nothing concrete has taken shape.

At one point of time the outcry in Left politics was for radical change and not temporary reliefs or reforms. Today, even if the divisive issues within the Left are resolved, the party can hardly claim a unique political or ideological position. At the same time, in the present parliamentary democracy, there is always the fear of a political party sinking into power-politics.

Parliamentary democracy is well entrenched in Indian politics. The question is whether parliamentary democracy can become a tool of poverty eradication, social justice and economic equality, which is not the aim of the present bourgeois political setup. “Right” elements among the Left forces and a lack of responsibility among the major Left forces have not only retarded the process of social mobilization on political issues but also impeded the pace of polarization on political lines. Instead, polarization has surfaced at places like Bombay on communal lines.

Poor Package

Here lies the failure of the Left forces. The emancipated Indian Muslims know that their fate is tied to that of India’s and that they are very much part of the mainstream of India’s socioeconomic and cultural life. No package deal or politics of appeasement can solve the minority problem. But fundamentalists—Muslim or Hindu—are detrimental to any organized mass movement. More dangerous is the politics of opportunism that exploits India’s twin complexes—the minority complex and the majority complex.

Can the Left forces consolidate at this hour of crisis? With the debacle of Communism in the erstwhile Soviet Union and East Europe, the CPI(M) has started a process of self-assessment and self-criticism. It also started trying to network at the national level, to seek alliance with forces even akin to Naxalites. Reportedly, it has already exerted efforts to be patronized by parties like IPF [Indian People’s Front] in areas where it does not find its feet, such as in Bihar. While the CPI(M), in the present state of turmoil in Congress(I) politics, may not find enough reason to be afraid of it, at least in West Bengal, it has every reason to worry about the emerging strength of the BJP as a substitute for the Congress(I) at the national plane. The Narasimha Rao brand of politics has brought the Congress(I) close to the urban upper middle class and the rich in the rural sector while the lower middle class and the vast majority of the rural poor are afraid of being drawn into the BJP’s fold after the Ayodhya turmoil.

Not Easy

The CPI(M) and its allies hope to salvage something if the BJP fails to survive the Ayodhya aftermath. The hope seems to have been substantiated by the faction-ridden CPI(ML)’s calls for Left unity. Without delving into the details of ideological or tactical lines on which they differ, the Vinod Mishra group of the CPI(ML) has, in its recently concluded fifth congress in Calcutta, called for the Left alternative, obviously implying a third option. But it is not easy for all Left forces to come together just to stave off the Hindutva wave. India has several other problems. Cashing in on the preachings of some great sons of the soil may strengthen the vote bank but will not help solve economic problems.

Thus the BJP psychosis haunts CPI(M) in places other than West Bengal, while the Hindutva wave, it is feared, will take the wind out the Congress(I) sail unless the Ayodhya issue is amicably settled. The CPI(M), which has plunged headlong to turn the minority sentiment into its trump card, hardly stands a chance just by condemning the BJP as communal. In West Bengal at least, it is not the BJP but promoter-political hoodlum nexus that played havoc in the guise of communal acrimony. Also, the CPI(M) was caught on the wrong foot by influencing the Centre’s decision to topple the three BJP-led State Governments by the imposition of Article 356.

Political consciousness is not the same as playing with sentiments. Religious grounds apart, the socio-economic hiatus has angered the masses. Neither the present state apparatus nor the Left forces provide any reason to expect a qualitative change. In the present scenario of bourgeois combinations, the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic combination can at best be another bourgeois parliamentary alternative which can hardly keep away from the politics of appeasement or root out the devil of communalism, let alone other problems.

Advani Interviewed on Cultural Nationalism

93AS0673F Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 12 Mar 93 pp 31-33

[Lal Krishna Advani interviewed by Shastri Ramachandran: "We Will Advocate Cultural Nationalism"]

[Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is sparing no effort to impress upon us that it will be the principal claimant to power at the Centre in the next general elections. Even as efforts at mass mobilization are underway at various levels, there is vigorous debate and discussion within party fora to define its policy on a range of issues from economic liberalization to "cultural nationalism" and from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty to how it would make India's strength felt at the international level.

In his first major interview on policy issues exclusively, L.K. Advani, leader of the BJP Parliamentary Party, outlines the directions his party would set for the country if it were to assume office. Answering a wide range of searching questions, Advani spells out, in his interview to the WEEKLY, how the BJP would deal with Pakistan, how it would formulate a uniform civil code and its policy on minorities and foreign investment.

Your party believes that the people increasingly expect it to lead the country. Within the framework of the Hindu culture, what policies do you consider to be the priority of the BJP, as a distinct break from political traditions?

The preamble to the question suggests that the party regards itself as being on the threshold of power at the Centre. The fact is we are optimistic that if an election were held there is a distinct possibility of that the BJP would come to power. But going round the country and meeting people, I have a feeling that we may be only optimistic about the possibility, whereas our adversaries seem to regard that eventuality as being more than certain.

So far as the question itself is concerned, I would only like to say that for four decades now the political battle in the country has been mainly in terms of power, not in terms of ideology. The Congress has been in power for the greater part of these four and a half decades and political polarisation in the country has been on the basis of Congress and anti-Congress. And all political parties which have sought power have sought power purely on the basis of anti-Congressism. If there was some kind of ideological dimension at all, it was only in 1977, immediately after the Emergency.

In the last few years, the biggest achievement of the BJP has been to transform Indian politics into two new camps: the BJP camp and the anti-BJP. This distinction—taking place even when we are not in power, but on the verge of power—is because we have succeeded in precipitating a debate on the nature of Indian nationalism and the true meaning of secularism. When we speak of our faith in Hindu culture et cetera, I wish it

were recognised in the terms I have already stated—because there has been a tendency to attribute our various positions on the Hindu-Muslim issue as reflecting a desire to convert India into a Hindu theocratic State and to abandon secularism. So, at the very outset, let me make it clear that the BJP is unequivocally committed to secularism.

Secularism in what sense?

Secularism in the sense in which it underscored our freedom movement, in the sense our Constitution-makers understood it. The Constitution-makers believed that a secular State was not an irreligious State. Nor even an areligious State.

The controversies and debates in which the country has become presently engrossed are the upshot of a distorted practice of secularism.

What would the BJP policy on minorities be?

We would like the Constitution to be honestly adhered to. We would like to see an end to the politics of vote banks. We would like to see the State abandon its politics of double standard in dealing with the majority and the minority. We are confident that if this is done, communal riots can be contained.

Today, the BJP is in a position to address the Muslims of the country, asking them to judge the BJP by its track record in so far as preserving communal peace is concerned. In Uttar Pradesh, Kalyan Singh was in office only for 1 ½ years. In the preceding years, there used to be over half a dozen riots every year. But in these 1 ½ years there was just one incident in Varanasi which was immediately contained. Even after 6 December, the states that were affected the worst were not BJP-ruled states. They were Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The Constitution guarantees such religious groups its freedoms. This restrained successive governments from drawing up a common civil code. What does the BJP propose to do about this?

To promote the process of integration, the Directive Principle relating to a uniform civil code should be taken up seriously. It has been put into cold storage essentially for electoral considerations. I recall that even when the Hindu Code Bill was being passed by Parliament, a large section of the Hindu society was not in favor. When the BJP talks of a uniform civil code, it does not contemplate imposing the Hindu law on the country. Our party manifesto has very clearly stated that the BJP would ask the Law Commission to examine the Hindu law, the Muslim law, the Christian law and the Parsi law and cull out the modern, progressive, equitable ingredients of these laws and, on that basis, draw up a common civil code.

Will the provision on the Hindu Undivided Family [HUF] be scrapped?

If some of the laws relating to the Hindus today have to go on that account, they have to go. For example, the HUF may have to go. Whatever has to be done has to be done for all.

Your party wants Article 370, which makes special provisions for Jammu and Kashmir, to go. Why would you exclude the special provisions made for other states?

Article 370 should too, in fact, as a part of the Constitution itself. The Constitution-makers contemplated that Article 370 would be a temporary provision. It was stated very clearly—at that point of time the matter had been referred to the UN—that Kashmir had been invaded by Pakistan and, therefore, for some time this kind of provision was necessary. But today it is very glibly said that that is the basis on which Kashmir agreed to accede to India. It is our commitment that it would always be there. This is factually not true. Therefore, Nehru and successive prime ministers waited for the Article to be eroded progressively rather than scrap it altogether. It is only subsequently that suddenly they turned around to declare it a sacrosanct provision, the scrapping of which would mean going back on our commitment to the people of Kashmir.

I wish people were able to realise that the continuation of Article 370 has not benefited the common man in Kashmir. Only a small section of the rulers have taken full advantage of the provision. The recent definitive book on Kashmir by Jagmohan has spelt out at length how the poor people have been hurt by this provision.

Apart from that, the continuance of this provision has made the state vulnerable to the wiles of Pakistan which keeps exploiting the fears of the people by constantly reminding them that their fate is still to be decided in spite of New Delhi's statements that accession is final and irrevocable.

I would think that Article 371 stands on a different pedestal. If you want to have autonomous regions for say, Vidarbha or Telangana, that is an arrangement made by the Constitution-makers themselves or by Parliament subsequently. One can discuss and debate Article 371. But it does not fall in the same category as Article 370. I believe that Article 370 is being supported by political parties of the country for electoral considerations.

For the first time, a political party which sees itself on the threshold of power has caused concern about the social order it seeks to establish. Given the 'ethnic cleansing' in some parts of the world, there are apprehensions that the BJP's policies might result in India's international isolation?

First of all, a party formulates its policies essentially from the point of view of the people within the country.

And a country's image abroad, and that of its government has far more to do with the state of the country within—its stability, unity and dynamism—than any abstract theories or even ideology. I do not propose to give examples of countries which have concentrated entirely on matters within, totally unmindful of the image that is created abroad. That is not my party's approach. My party is conscious of the fact that in the shrinking world, in the overall conditions of our economy and all points put together, any political party which aspires to rule this vast country cannot be indifferent to international opinion.

The adverse publicity the party has received in the past few months, mainly due to the government's vicious tirade against the party, is a passing phase. After all, if my own government projects the BJP as a party which does not believe in the Constitution, in secularism, which wants to create a fundamentalist, theocratic State, I do not expect other governments to dismiss this kind of charge very lightly. Though, as time passes, they would surely see how baseless and slanderous all these allegations are.

Recent international visitors, John Major of Britain and Boris Yeltsin of Russia, not meeting the BJP leaders is considered significant, since earlier visitors called on the BJP leadership. Your comments.

I can only say that visitors who come on official visits generally go by the advice the government gives them. So, I do not regard this as reflective of the attitude of those governments. I regard it as reflective of the attitude of the Government of India.

Given the predominantly Muslim countries' perception of the BJP as an anti-Muslim party, how would you ensure the success of regional cooperation? What will the BJP policy on SAARC be?

I think I have already replied to that earlier. I may even mention that only a few days back, the Pakistan High Commissioner came to see me here. He was with me for 45 minutes or more, and I think he quite appreciates our position. He may not agree with our viewpoint, but he does not... I can only say that he was able to understand our viewpoint.

Did he have no apprehensions?

I don't think so. I cannot quote him that way. But I can only recall that in 1977, when Morarjibhai took over as prime minister and proposed to entrust the external affairs portfolio to Vajpayee, the party had very strong misgivings: that Vajpayee belonged to the Jan Sangh, that he belonged to the RSS, and that entrusting him with this responsibility might hamper relations with Pakistan. And it so turned out that those three years were perhaps the best period in Indo-Pak relations.

On the question of SAARC...

I don't think it has anything to do with which party comes to power. I do feel that the prime minister should have gone to Dhaka.

India is also dependent on the Gulf countries for strategic supplies, particularly oil. How would you overcome the

antipathy of the Islamic countries where it affects our trade and strategic supplies?

You should recall that this point had always been raised whenever my party demanded that we have full-fledged diplomatic ties with Israel. The immediate answer used to be: the reaction of the Gulf countries should be considered. And when we did decide to do it, nothing happened. Not in those Gulf countries. Not within the country. Even after December 6, there were reactions in Pakistan and Bangladesh. But there have been practically no reactions in the Gulf countries. Some of the Gulf countries refused to do anything and when some people from Pakistan did something, they took action against them.

These events strengthen our conviction that those who oppose our viewpoints on these matters do it essentially for political and electoral considerations.

In a unipolar world, the challenge is from the emerging Islamic bloc. Our image abroad will influence our credibility and rating with international financial institutions. Is it in anticipation of this that your party has thought of the Swadeshi Alternative, for sustenance in the face of international isolation?

No. My party is not in favour of isolation. It favours liberalisation. But we believe that, given the industrial base we have built up, a precipitate plunge towards globalisation may adversely affect this base and cause serious problems of unemployment and consequent social tensions which a democracy can ill-afford. Therefore, while liberalisation is welcome, the move towards globalisation should be cautious. Foreign capital and multinationals should be encouraged in the high technology areas, not in the area of consumer goods. When we talk of swadeshi and self-reliance, we mean essentially this. We should have a strategy which progressively emancipates us from foreign debt.

The other part of the question was about the Islamic bloc. With the collapse of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Muslim countries shifting ground to pursue their interests through Islamic organisations, what kind of international role does your party foresee for India?

I think it will take time for things to settle down. The unipolar world has come upon the globe with an abruptness with which every country has to adjust. Our approach should be to focus maximum attention on economic development and progress within the country; providing dynamism to this progress by the approach towards nationalism which we have adopted. I describe it as cultural nationalism. It is not religious nationalism.

This talk these days about Hindu rashtra: I react very strongly when people say that the BJP when it comes to power will declare the country a Hindu rashtra. My conception is that this country whether you call it India or Bharat, has its roots in a Hindu ethos. And, in that sense, it has always been a Hindu rashtra. It was a Hindu rashtra, it is a Hindu rashtra and it shall remain a Hindu

rashtra. 'Hindu' in the religious sense may exclude the Arya Samaji, the Sikh and the Jain, but Hindu in the civilisational sense has a very wide connotation. And in that sense, this is a Hindu rashtra.

So you don't really foresee an international role for India?

The role will very much depend upon the strength we are able to build up. Today, everyone talks about people being reluctant to come here. That is because of an unstable government, and unstable international situation and riots like those witnessed in Bombay. If we have been able to keep our states riot-free, I see no reason why the BJP cannot make the whole country riot-free.

If the BJP-run states were able to give their people a clean administration and a corruption-free state government, the party can easily repeat this record in the country as whole. Attracting foreign investors depends more on these factors than on whether we have a government which is committed to secularism or a government whose commitment to secularism is dubious according to our adversaries. These factors, I think, are irrelevant. More relevant are stability, peace, a corruption-free administration and less red tape. I feel confident that the BJP would be able to provide this.

What policy does the BJP have in mind on defence and national security? Should India go nuclear, retain the nuclear option or persist with the present government's policy of opposition to the NPT?

It has been the BJP stand that after China and Pakistan became nuclear, India does not really have an option in this regard. India must develop its nuclear deterrent.

We are in favour of a world which is free from any nuclear threat. We are opposed to India signing the present Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which we regard as discriminatory. We have not formally taken the position, but we have, at times, expressed that India could sign the NPT after becoming nuclear. But we think that in 1995, when there will be a comprehensive review of the NPT, the NPT can be made non-discriminatory and universal in its application.

Our immediate security concern vis-a-vis Pakistan is its continuing interference in Kashmir and Punjab. Somehow we have not been able to stop it.

What should be done to stop it?

Well, it is... I need not spell it out here, but it is not impossible. We have been advocating for a long time that, say in Punjab, those in charge of security must be given a free hand for a year or so. Right from 1984 till today, it is only during the last one year that this has been done. We have been of the view that the border should be sealed. We have been saying it since 1984. It is only in this one last year that this was done and we can see the results.

In the Kashmir and Punjab kind of situations, squeamishness is totally out of place. Because it is not just a

law and order problem. It is virtually a war by other means that our neighbour has launched on us. The response has to be adequate to this kind of threat or assault. Once we do to it, the results are there, on the ground. Jagmohan (former governor of Jammu & Kashmir) was immediately called back after one incident. If he had been allowed to remain for six more months, I am sure the situation there also would have been brought under control by now. I do not say that the problem is solved.

What course of action would your party suggest on Kashmir? Considering that in 45 years of history India has retained its part at great cost, would your party want Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to be wrested? Is that an achievable aim?

There is weight in the argument, in the contention, that one of the weaknesses of our Kashmir policy has been to reconcile with the ground reality and then to be, all the while, defensive about the part of territory which we still control. We reconcile with the fact that occupied-Kashmir is a part of Pakistan. Theoretically, we keep 25 seats vacant in the state assembly as representing that occupied part. But in practical terms, while conceding that war cannot solve the problems, we should miss no opportunity to point out that the root cause of the problem is aggression by Pakistan; aggression which has enabled them to occupy, illegally, one-third of J&K state, which legally and legitimately belongs to India.

Given the BJP's commitment to 'nationalism,' how do you justify the likelihood of an alliance with the AIADMK which panders to pan-Tamil sentiments, bordering on Tamil sub-nationalism?

I don't think that is a problem. I do not know what shape politics in Tamil Nadu takes. But this much seems evident; there has been a very sharp rupture in the Congress-AIADMK relationship. The BJP is now concentrating on building its own organisation at the grass-roots. The chief minister of Tamil Nadu met me a few months back and we had a long discussion on the general political situation. Some of the pronouncements she made after that, particularly in respect of Ayodhya, have evoked an appreciative response in the BJP. How things develop depends on so many factors.

But I do not think that the kind of secessionist feelings that were there two decades back in Tamil Nadu are there any more.

CPI (ML) Seen Weak, Exaggerating Claims of Strength

93AS0674H Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
8 Mar 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Red Wine in Old Bottle"]

[Text] Though the CPI(ML) [Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist)] leader, Mr Vinod Mishra's prediction that his faction will emerge as the strongest Communist force in the country by the end of the century can be dismissed as propaganda, there is no denying that the emergence of the Indian People's Front [IPF], the party's mass organization in the Hindi belt and some other states like Assam may well be the next turning point in the Left movement. Strikingly, however, this has been achieved only by jettisoning the rabid Naxalite doctrines of individual killings and hostility towards parliamentary democracy. There is now little to distinguish Mr Mishra's ideology from that of the older Communist Parties, now very much a part of the political establishment. Mr Mishra's apostasy of suggesting that his party is not averse to forming a Government in Bihar is in line with his readiness to go in for strategic alliances with "secular" individuals in the Janata Dal and the Congress(I). In Uttar Pradesh, the IPF has developed cordial relations with the Bommai faction of the Janata Dal, and its recently proscribed Varanasi rally was in tandem with established political parties other than the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Congress(I). Even if this virtually obliterates all earlier naxalite distinguishing marks, the main appeal of Mr Mishra's political line is in its clear refusal to tag along with the Congress(I) in countering the BJP's menace and the ability to organize militant movements learnt from two decades of successful organization in the violent districts of north and central Bihar. The party's influence has begun to spread to eastern Uttar Pradesh, a powerful indication of which was the demonstration by Allahabad University students against the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] supremo Mr Ashok Singhal's attempt at raising the national flag on the campus on January 26. The CPI(ML) has a better feel of the popular culture of the Hindi heartland, something which the CPI(M) has failed to grasp and the CPI has forgotten in its comfortable petit-bourgeois existence over the years. Despite the party's claims of emerging as the Left flag-bearer in the Hindi heartland, Mr Mishra's faction has a long way to go before it can even equal the other two Communist Parties there. In between, it runs the risk of inviting their wrath as a dangerous upstart.

CPM Said To Oppose Legitimate Police Actions

93AS0674F Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
8 Mar 93 p 7

[Article by Barun Ghosh: "CPM Rebukes 'Crusader' Police Officer"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Berhampore, March 7: The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] is up in arms against the Murshidabad district superintendent of police, Mr Anil Kumar, who has launched a drive against antisocials backed by the party.

Only three months ago Mr Anil Kumar was the blue-eyed boy of the party leadership for his action against antisocials supported by the Forward Bloc (FB), which has a considerable base in the district.

The CPI(M) leadership had not condemned the alleged harassment of a Forward Bloc leader of Islampur, "despite a request from the Forward Bloc minister, Mrs Chaya Ghosh."

The CPI(M) cadres took to the streets in a sudden volte face only last week when the police arrested the district president of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), Mr Shyam De, for harassing two senior Enforcement Branch officials near Berhampore Bazaar.

Mr De, a member of the district CPI(M) committee, was confined in lockup for a night on February 26. He was accused of threatening the two officials with dire consequences.

CPI(M) bigwigs openly came out against the police "highhandedness." Even the party MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] and DYFI president, Mr Manab Mukherjee, issued a strong statement cautioning the SP [Superintendent of Police] against going ahead with his "terror tactics."

Political circles here interpret the CPI(M)'s move as an affront on police freedom and an attempt to interfere in its activities.

The Forward Bloc district president, Mr Jayanta Roy, alleged that the "CPI(M) is now after the SP since he has worked out a plan to round up antisocials, who have been enjoyed the party's patronage over the years."

He admitted that "seventy-five per cent of antisocials in Murshidabad are backed by the CPI(M), and the rest by the Forward Bloc." Mr Roy added that his party was ready to drive out the antisocials enjoying its backing. He demanded that the CPI(M) should list the antisocials it supports and make public its plans to get rid of them.

In fact, after the Hariharpara killings last year, leaders of the CPI(M) and Forward Bloc had decided at a meeting in October to identify antisocials backed by political parties. However, no progress has been made so far.

The CPI(M) district secretary, Mr Madhu Bag, does not agree with this view. "It is the Forward Bloc which has been patronising antisocials in the rural belt. How dare it accuse us of doing the same? Antisocials have no place in our party," he said.

Asked to comment on the SP, Mr Anil Kumar's crack-down on antisocials, an agitated Mr Bag said, "We cannot sit idle while the police harass our party cadres in the name of a drive against antisocials."

He alleged that over a dozen party workers were still behind bars. "We will not spare the SP and will launch a movement to protest his highhandedness," he warned.

Police sources revealed that the SP had further incurred the CPI(M)'s wrath by indicting a section of party leaders for the murder of Asit Mishra, sabhapati of the

Hariharpara Panchayat Samiti, who died in May last year. Investigations revealed Mishra had been killed due to intra-party rivalry.

Mr Kumar himself admitted he was often disturbed by political leaders in the district. "But I am hardly bothered about that because to me, it (the antisocial drive) is a mission," he said.

He made it clear that he had nothing against the CPI(M) or the Forward Bloc. "Antisocials are always antisocials and we have to treat them that way," he said.

CPI National Council Meets 4-6 Feb

93AS0634A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
9 Feb 93 p 20

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 8—The CPI [Communist Party of India] has proposed an amendment to the Representation of People's Act to prevent religious propaganda or the use of religious symbols in election campaigns. It has stressed that the amendment should be effective during the election campaign itself rather than as a "post-election punitive measures."

The party National Council which met here from February 4 to 6, reviewed the current political situation. It agreed that legal measures alone cannot resolve the present dispute or break down the communal divide. The first task, therefore, should be political mobilisation against communalism the party reiterated.

While apportioning the main share of blame to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and its allies for the worsening communal situation, the party also retained its criticism of the Congress and the Prime Minister.

Addressing a press conference, the CPI general secretary, Mr Indrajit Gupta, said, "The credibility of the Prime Minister has touched a new low. He cannot absolve himself of all moral responsibility."

The National Council warned the government that unless it reversed its new economic policies, the party would actively oppose the forthcoming Budget both within and outside Parliament. It also resolved to renew agitations on economic issue.

Opposing the BJP demand for a mid-term poll, the CPI general secretary alleged that the BJP only wants to gain political mileage out of communal tension and the "present surcharged atmosphere." Expressing apprehensions over the BJP rally on February 25. Mr Gupta said that the government should take adequate steps to enforce law and order. He, however, did not favour a ban on the rally.

The National Council took special note of the communalisation of the bureaucracy and administration in the states currently under President's rule. "Minorities and Left activists are being victimised and beaten up," the CPI leader said. "Cleaning up the administration," he felt, "will be a difficult task."

BJP Said Spreading Into the Southern States

93AS0673A New Delhi ORGANISER in English
28 Feb 93 p 9

[Article by O. Rajagopal: "BJP in Southern States"]

[Text] The impact of Ram Janmabhoomi movement was not felt as fast in South Indian States as it was elsewhere. But the recent visit of Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi left no doubt, if any, in people's mind about the massive upsurge of Hindutva in Southern States. The spectre of rising Islamic fundamentalism (courtesy ISS [Islamic Sevak Sangh]) hastened the polarization of nationalists and pseudo-secularists into separate camps. The Congress pandering to fundamentalists, especially to ISS, came into sharp focus; so much so that even the Christian rank and file is talking in terms of dissociating with Congress and joining BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party].

Kerala

Christians account for twenty one percent of population mostly in southern Kerala while Muslims accounting for the same percentage are restricted to northern Kerala. Earlier BJP entered electoral politics without this 42 percent of support. This vote-bank of 42 percent is crucial to win elections especially when the rest 58 percent is split among various political parties.

With the rise of international Islamic fundamentalism and Congress' total inability to fight it, Christians are eagerly looking upto BJP. The change in the attitude of the community is reflected in the now the famous speech of a senior Congress leader Shri A. K. Antony. He asked for change in attitude among minority community which can live peacefully not with the help of Pakistan or America, nor even with the rights enshrined in the Constitution but only by winning the heart of the majority community.

The majority of Muslims too are disillusioned with Congress. The reason they attribute is the indiscriminate support lent to fundamentalists by Congress. The role of ISS and its Chief Madani is too well known to merit mention. These fundamentalists, rank and file of Muslim community argue, put also in danger.

The Congress is in total disarray not only within itself but also with its alliance partners. Recently it gave a call to join an anti-communal convention. Leftist parties refused to join saying when Muslim League is Congress' partner how could this convention be anti-communal. Muslim League refused blaming Congress for not protecting the Babri structure. Ultimately Congress decided to hold the convention all alone but, lo and behold, the two factions of Congress one led by Karunakaran and the other by Antony openly fought among themselves in the hall. The Congress, thus, has come to a pathetic state.

In such a situation some political force is bound to fill the political void. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi's Ekta Yatra drew unprecedented crowds and a groundwell for BJP had begun to form. The people of the state who were not

knowing much of the BJP and issues it was fighting against, were informed of the same by southern newspapers which published vivid details of BJP's activities. The demolition of Babri structure by angry karsevaks fuelled people's imagination.

The response of the people during Dr. Joshi's visit reflected the extent to which people are galvanised by Ram Janmabhoomi. In train journey from Palghat to Trivandrum, huge crowds of people swelled up at all the intervening stations to hear him. In comparison, V. P. Singh's visit supported by leftists supposedly strong in Kerala came a cropper. If people's mood is any indication saffron is going to fly high in the southernmost State of India.

Tamil Nadu

For last two decades regional parties—AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] and DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] are holding sway in Tamil Nadu. But issues like Ram Janmabhoomi and Ekta Yatra have helped shift people's focus from local issues to national ones. The growing support of people for BJP is evident as much in the massive crowd that assembled to hear Dr. Joshi in recent weeks as in the survey INDIAN EXPRESS by which found the biggest number of its readership supporting BJP.

The alliance between Congress and AIADMK is withering with each passing day. The team of Congress observers that was sent from Delhi to clear the bad blood between the two partners had to brave rough weather on account of rising sense of humiliation in local Congress camp at the hands of Jayalalitha.

The frustration in AIADMK camp with Congress-I is not little. Dispute over Kaveri water and subsequent partisan stance of Congress high command left a scar in the minds of rank and file. Jayalalitha's repeated failure to seek an appointment with Shri Rao perhaps added salt to injury.

On the other hand an affinity in the thinking of BJP and AIADMK is emerging. As for example Jayalalitha was the only Chief Minister who spoke for Ram Mandir in the meeting of NIC [National Integration Council]. Even ordinary party worker of AIADMK feels that he had enough of Congress and now for once BJP should be given a chance at Centre. This perhaps explains the massive turnout at Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi's meetings in Tamil Nadu.

Though it would be presumptuous at this stage to foresee any future alliance between BJP and AIADMK what is now clear is the fact that BJP would perform quite well even if it goes to polls all alone. In case of its alliance with AIADMK, which may seem remote but not impossible, BJP would clean sweep the State.

Karnataka

In Karnataka BJP is in very advantageous position largely due to the vacuum in the opposition created by vanishing Janata Dal. It was Janata Dal, the main non-Congress opposition which held sway till recently. Ramakrishna Hegde, celebrity of yesteryears (thanks to media) is now lost in political oblivion. There is hardly any charismatic leader left who can pull the Dal out of the mire.

BJP has meanwhile succeeded in associating itself with farmers in a big way. It has organised numerous marches and meetings against price-hike in fertilizers and the unfair treatment meted out to agriculturists. It is now seen as a party which espouses farmers' cause and has thus endeared itself to the people.

Last but not the least is the impact of Ram Janmabhoomi movement on the mind of average people. The appeasement policy pursued by Congress and a distorted version of secularism preached by it since long, are attacked in average people's conversation. Thus if BJP won sizable percentage of votes in last elections it would be small wonder if it takes a quantum jump this time.

Andhra

The largest section of kar-sevaks to Ayodhya was from Andhra Pradesh. The waves for Ram Janmabhoomi was also first felt in Andhra, possible on account of it being nearer to Hindi heartland.

Telugu Desham party of N. T. Rama Rao has split into many factions—one among them is led by P. Upendra. Even otherwise the whole party is vertically divided over the issue of Ram Janmabhoomi. When in parliament, a proposal to oppose BJP was sent from Hyderabad, the contradiction within the party came on surface with a sizable section against this. Ultimately a compromise was struck and the proposal was shelved. Rama Rao's affinity to leftist outfits has also disillusioned many of party ranks, who have begun to look eagerly towards BJP.

BJP's programme of going to villages (for past two years) has also made the party popular in the countryside. The party's subsequent support for VHP's [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] call for Ram temple has paid rich dividends.

Congress factionalism is also at its worst in Andhra which is reflected in the constant come and go of new chief ministers. This inability of Congress has helped people focus attention on BJP's whose guarantee of stability is conceded by its critics too.

There was indeed some sympathy for a Telugu Prime Minister but it has waned since then. However, the factor of Ram temple has not. Besides, the growing menace of Naxalism and BJP's staunch opposition to it is well known. The party paid heavy price fighting this menace in the past. Congress and TDP [Teluga Desam Party] have aided and abetted this movement for their own petty gains. BJP is commonly seen as the only party

which can effectively counter the menace of Naxalism. The BJP is standing on a strong wicket and the wave of Hindutva may sweep all others off their feet.

Internal Party Elections Said Causing BJP Headaches

93AS0682A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 15 Mar 93 pp 1, 6

[Article by Shyam Khosla: "BJP in a Dilemma Over Organizational Elections"]

[Text] New Delhi, 14 March—Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, is opposing internal party elections now. This has caused a feeling of uncertainty over elections.

The biennial elections of the party scheduled for November were postponed because of plans for the 6 December karsewa. On 27 February, in a party national working committee meeting, it was decided to plan for elections and to conclude elections at state level by 15 May. Party president, Dr. Joshi, was wounded in the 25 February rally and could not participate in the working committee meeting. Sunder Singh Bhandari, the senior vice president of the BJP, had chaired the meeting in his place.

After thinking more about the elections issue, the Joshi group smelled a rat. This group maintains that they are trying to raise the question of Dr. Joshi's re-election as the party president. Some leaders told Dr. Joshi that holding party elections at this time might divert its members' attention from revolutionary activities as they would be busy in the elections. The BJP is organizing the campaign to collect signatures in support of Ram temple.

Dr. Joshi wrote a letter to Mr. Bhandari on 5 March asking him on behalf of party leaders to postpone the party elections. He sent a copy of this letter to Devdas Apte, the secretary of the party, and asked him to inform the state level units of the party about it. It is said that Mr. Apte informed the state offices about the party president's feelings.

Four days after receiving the letter, Mr. Bhandari told the newsmen that the party elections were not canceled and that the news published in the newspapers about it was wrong. He emphasized that no change was made in the plan to finish state-level elections By middle of May. When a reporter brought to his attention the demand of some BJP leaders to postpone the internal party elections, Mr. Bhandari said that the decision to hold the elections was made by the national working committee and only it could change that. The next working committee meeting is scheduled for 10-12 April in Calcutta. This issues will be discussed then.

Mr. Bhandari looks after the administrative issues of the BJP and his decisions in this area are considered final. He pushed for the elections even after receiving the letter from the party president. This indicates that he is firm

about holding party elections. Sources within the BJP revealed that the decision to hold elections was made after a lot of discussions. The RSS [Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh] family leadership has also discussed this issue. These sources said that the BJP is firm about following democracy in its internal structure, and will not postpone elections repeatedly.

Those who support postponing elections say that the BJP struggle against the central government is still going on and the internal party elections might give rise to internal differences and groups politics. This split could cause serious problems in states where the party has a majority. The other groups also concedes the possibility of factionalism. However, it does not want to choke internal democracy in order to stop factionalism.

Even though the BJP leader do not discuss this issue openly, the fact is that the issue of internal elections is related to Dr. Joshi's future. The party officials and members are wondering if they should election Dr. Joshi as president again or not. The party does not seem to agree on this issue.

K.R. Malkani, the party's vice president, said that as far as he knows there have been no changes in holding party elections. However, this issue will be further discussed in the Calcutta meeting. Mr. Apte, the party secretary, does not want to discuss this issue because of its sensitivity. However, he did say that he has not sent any information to state offices of the party about postponing internal elections.

CPM Said 'Jittery' Over BJP Convention

93AS0674A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
10 Mar 93 p 7

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Calcutta, March 9: The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India] is apparently jittery over the BJP's decision to hold its three-day national executive meeting from April 10 in the city.

Political circles here interpret this as a well-designed gameplan to outwit the Marxists who are determined to take on the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. It remains to be seen as to how the CPI(M) leadership tackles the proposed BJP-rally at the Brigade Parade Ground on April 11. It is learnt that the BJP is yet to get clearance from the state government for the proposed rally although it had applied for it weeks ago.

According to the state BJP president, Mr Tapan Sikdar, all national leaders including Mr L. K. Advani, party president, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi will be in the city for the meeting. He said the party all-India secretary, Mr J. P. Mathur is coming here tomorrow to discuss the strategy for the rally.

It is learnt that the BJP has already begun a fund-collection drive for the proposed meeting. It is approaching city businessmen especially those who had attended the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Mr Kalyan Singh's luncheon at Calcutta Club last month.

BJP Influence Said Impacting CPM Alliances

93AS0674D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
10 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Tarun Ganguly: "Crisis Begets Comradeship"]

[Text]

The BJP's Growing Influence Has Forced New Political Alignments on the CPI(M)

After more than 15 years in power in West Bengal, the Marxists are displaying an eagerness to change their political stance. Gone are the days when anti-Congressism was the staple diet for the party. The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] is in fact pushing closer to the Congress in national politics. Within the state, it seems to have given up its reservations about the extreme left represented by the Socialist Unity Centre of India [SUCI] and various factions of the Naxalites. The evergrowing presence of the Bharatiya Janata Party appears to have forced the Marxists to redraw their political line.

The spurt of violence in east Calcutta and the port area following the demolition of the Babri mosque on December 6, 1992, was perhaps the first big jolt for the party. When antisocials took over the streets in the Ayodhya backlash, the much vaunted cadres of the party were nowhere to be seen to put up a fight against the marauders. The army had to be called in to save the situation. This singular experience forced the CPI(M) to mend its fences with the extreme left. That is why, in the Brigade Parade ground rally called by the Left Front to organise secular forces, Mr Dipankar Bhattacharyya of the Indian People's Front was allowed to share the platform with Mr Jyoti Basu, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav and Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Serious attempts are being made to broaden the Left Front by coming to some understanding with the 18 party front of the SUCI, the IPF [Indian People's Front] and other Naxalite factions. It is also busy selectively accommodating some dissidents who were thrown out of the CPI(M).

The CPI(M) is perhaps the only national party which has realised the gravity of the BJP challenge. It will not be surprising if the Marxists forge some understanding with the extreme left to finalise nominations for the panchayat polls scheduled for May 30. The precondition that at least 33 per cent of the panchayat candidates should be women has posed some difficulties of the Left Front partners.

The CPI(M) and other Left Front partners have realised the BJP will try to test its strength in the districts by putting up as many candidates for as many seats as possible. More so, because of the divisions within the Congress. BJP sources gleefully claim they expect to make a significant dent in the Congress vote bank in the state. In such a situation the CPI(M) has been left with no other choice but to strengthen left unity by accommodating the extreme left parties to thwart the BJP's designs.

What has queered the pitch however is the BJP's attempt to form its own trade union in the police force. Both the CPI(M) and the Congress have their own associations in the state police. A third union by the BJP would seriously affect the loyalty and morale of the force. There is no denying the Hindutva campaign has struck a sympathetic chord among sections of the subordinate staff in the police force. The information minister, Mr Budhadhev Bhattacharyya, announced some time ago he would see to it places of worship inside police stations were demolished. But to date not a single shrine of either Bajrangbali or goddess Kali in any of the thanas or outposts has been touched.

The reason is obvious. Political authorities had to play safe so as not to create new problems within the police force. But the attitude of some policemen after the Babri demolition has compelled them to take the situation seriously. The chief minister himself addressed three meetings with policemen in Calcutta and Barrackpore to highlight the secular nature of the force.

On the national plane, the CPI(M) hopes to boost secularism by bringing together on the same platform all secular forces. This explains the lionising of Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav in Calcutta and the move to rope in Mr V. P. Singh too. According to the CPI(M), the Congress's failure to stand up to the BJP in the Hindi belt can only be countered by bringing together secular forces both in and out of the National Front-Left Front combine. Centrist forces represented by the Congress can be strengthened if like minded parties come together. This is no doubt a tall task, but in keeping with the view the CPI(M) has to work according to a game plan considering the growth of BJP fundamentalism in the Hindi heartland.

All these factors have forced the CPI(M) to redraw strategies it had been following for so long. It has realised dissent cannot be contained by throwing out dissidents. This only weakens the party's base in the long run. This is why dissenters are being reabsorbed in the districts. But the eagerness to close ranks against the BJP onslaught is likely to set back the party's plan to get rid of antisocials who jumped onto the red bandwagon.

When Bishtu Hazra alias Bhalluk was arrested in east Calcutta recently, no less a person than Mr Lakshmi Sen, secretary of the Calcutta district committee of the party, threatened to paralyse the area if he was not released. There may be similar attempts in other pockets to resist

the arrests of known antisocials like Sridhar and Moghul. There is also the problem of the nexus between party stalwarts and building promoters. The question is whether or not the party can afford to take action against such people to improve its image at a time the BJP is making inroads into the state. Probably not. The party has to depend on their muscle power to win elections.

The CPI(M) considers the panchayat polls a dress rehearsal for the eventual election to Lok Sabha and the assembly, one reason it attaches so much importance to it. Though panchayats did a commendable job till the late Eighties, the paucity of funds have affected development work in the villages during the past few years. A large number of panchayats have been accused of corruption and misappropriation of funds.

The panchayats also function in a manner that has created economic disparities in the villages where the have nots are now a majority. The BJP has skilfully exploited the disaffection among many villagers to enhance its support base. In certain border districts some sort of understanding has developed between lower order Congressmen and BJP supporters which might affect the panchayat poll results. The CPI(M) is aware of the development, one reason for its new found love for the extreme left. After all, all is fair in love and war. And in today's politics, polls may be described as simulated warfare.

Analyst Speculates on Direction of BJP Rule

93AS0673D Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 12 Mar 93 pp 28-30

[Article by C. P. Surendan: "BJP Rule: What Kind of India Will it Be?"]

[Text] If the BJP does come to power at the centre, what kind of world would it be? There is a great deal of upbeat talk about 'Swadeshi capitalism,' 'cultural nationalism' and a resurgent India. A Hindu Rashtra. But how Hindu will that Rashtra be? And which kind of Ram will you pray to?

Some leaders don't sweat. They are, after a fashion, like characters in Mankiewicz' Julius Caesar. All the characters, as Roland Barthes has observed, wear fringes. Tufted, curly or oily they might be. But there is no getting away from them. Barthes associates "these insistent fringes" with "Romanness:" ancient Romanness in fact. It is a sign; a flag flying on a forehead authorises them to "debate universal questions." They are the images of authority by virtue of wearing the fringe. No leader of the pro-Hindutva Bharatiya Janata Party sweats. Certainly not its supreme leader L.K. Advani. The BBC caught him in their camera soon after the kar sevaks had brought the roof down in Ayodhya on December 6 last year. Its reporter asked Advani if he accepted the responsibility for the hundreds of lives lost in the riots that followed. Advani did not bat an eyelid: the Rao government was responsible, he said. He and his politics had nothing to do with it. No sweat. No nervous

twitching of the muscle. No drying of the mouth. No tic in the cheek. No dearth of words. And plenty of clarity.

No sweat and plenty of clarity is the sign that keeps BJP leaders apart from others of lesser kidney. It is hard to catch them off guard. Be it Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, S. S. Bhandari or Advani, the party's spokesmen are all absolutely sure of themselves. No sickly self-doubts torment them. There is no sweat on their brow.

Why is that? Because the India they represent has no room for doubt. Advani, for instance, not only speaks in an assuringly calm authoritative fashion, he also uses the mode of speech to introduce into India's political discourse some of the most extreme terminology in recent times. He is nevertheless considered both respectable and a mainstream politician. The craft of that art is in keeping with the appropriating quality of his and his party's vision. Before December 6, the instances of Advani openly claiming India to be a Hindu rashtra were far and few between. Post-Ayodhya, Advani is more clear and necessarily more extreme: "This talk these days about Hindu rashtra, I react very strongly when people say that the BJP, when it comes to power, will declare the country a Hindu rashtra or will set up a Hindu rashtra. I say that my conception is that this country, whether you call it Indian or Bharatiya, has its roots in a Hindu ethos. And, in that sense, it has always been a Hindu rashtra. It was a Hindu rashtra, it is a Hindu rashtra and it shall remain a Hindu rashtra." (see interview) How naturally he appropriates, negotiates and overtakes yet another milestone in the revivalist discourse!

That is why, with the BJP, you are constantly on the defensive. This state of mind applies to Muslims, the ageing chronophages of the Congress and the derelict Left. As a result the history of India's political semantics is being rewritten. The secularists in the Congress and the left are suddenly having to defend themselves from being stamped pseudo-secularists. It is no longer enough to be patriot; you had better think of a good reason why you are not a "cultural nationalist." Religious tolerance, as is conventionally defined, is no more a give and take affair. It is sufferance—of the minority by the majority. Simultaneously, there is another kind of conceptual transformation taking place: the reduction of traditional plurality of meaning into the singular. Revivalist organs like *Organiser* advocate that Muslims must accept Ram as their god. The communal problem will be over. One god to all. The problem could not have a simpler, more singular solution. The possibility of other gods—the polytheistic concept—praying for their damned does not strike the party leaders. With one effortless rhetorical flourish the rich font of ideas associated with godhead is clogged till only a single trickle is left to wet the earth: Ram! There is nothing to prevent Advani and his party from asking the Christians and Parsis to take to an alien god once the BJP comes to power.

As with god, so with Kashmir. A high priority item of the BJP agenda is the revoking on Article 370 of the Constitution conferring special status on Kashmir. Why is

Kashmir not treated as the way other states are, asks the BJP, not quite taking into consideration the historical specificities of the border state's accession to India. But in the uniformalising vision of the BJP, all variants of history, all individual traits that go into the making of the character of a people or a place are best glossed over. Also, it is always easier to write one's own history than try to come to terms with an old one.

To a lesser extent, the same urge to reduce a multifaceted society into one cast iron-mould shapes the party's posture on a uniform civil code. The trouble here is not the demand for such a code; the trouble is that the demand comes from a party that is not prepared to tolerate any deviation by the 'other' from the normal; and the normal is itself.

The 'other' is often an existential critique of the self. For the BJP, the 'other' does not exist. But by some quirk of fate, if it is there, then it must be annihilated, as Hitler did the Jews. This extreme intolerance is most visible in the party's foreign policies. It does not think that its attitude to Muslims, for instance, will affect its relationship with the Middle East. As Advani put it, "Even after December 6, there have been reactions in Bangladesh and there have been reactions in Pakistan. But there have been practically no reactions in the Gulf countries. Some of the Gulf countries refused to do anything and if some people from Pakistan did something, they took action against them. These events also strengthen our conviction that those who opposed our viewpoints on these matters raise this bogey of reaction in Gulf countries essentially for political and electoral considerations and not as a right analysis of the situation." Whether this is true or not, these words Advani's insensitivity discovers in the pregnant silence of the Middle East indifference. And that is the kind of error in judgement that can start a war. The kind of error someone who is in love with himself is prone to.

Someone who is in love with himself and ideas of himself as a Hindu, I must add. Dr. Jay Dubashi is the convenor of the economic cell of the BJP and the party's spokesman on economic affairs. According to him, the "main driving force behind any development, particularly economic development, is national pride. Only a proud Indian can build a proud, self-sufficient and strong Indian economy... In India, the national identity can only be Hindu." (see box on page 30)

These are rather helpful ideas of the self: they add to the party's sense of well-being. The philosophical underpinning of the party's economic policy also makes sense, on the surface. The values Dubashi talks about are Hindu. And this is precisely where the party slips. The Hindu values are represented by the BJP in its domestic, foreign and economic policies are anything but. A uniform civil code, a foreign policy free of the Gulf factor and swadeshi capitalism are all variations of one theme song: the song in praise of the Hindu. The question to ask, of course, is: which Hindu?

Let us put it this way: which Ram? Some 23.5 per cent of the majority Hindu community is scheduled castes and tribes. The rest is made up of dozens of subdivisions. It is only about 15 per cent of savarna Hindus, most of them located in North India, who could claim to possess a relatively homogeneous Hindu tradition. This is a difficulty the BJP will have to contend with sooner or later. For the present, Ram remains a tradition—a reconciling tradition—with just one interpretation, whose use and meaning is principally seen in the formation of an ideology of a Hindu rashtra. This is the Ram of New Narration, a tradition in the making, but borrowed largely from the privileged Valmiki version. The version, incidentally, North Indian brahmins identify themselves with most. But once the Sangh parivar comes to power, the question will emerge; which Ram? 'Along with Valmiki's Ramayana,' says Paula Richman in *Many Ramayanas*, 'there are hundreds of other tellings of the story of Rama in India. And not all of them are tribal narrations. Kampan's *Iramavataram* incorporates South Indian material and is not likely to be easily assimilated by the Sangh parivar. The Jain tellings, 'which provide a non-Hindu perspective on familiar events; a Kannada folk tale that reflects preoccupations with sexuality and Sita's childbearing' are some of India's mainstream interpretations of Ram and his story. In Tamil Nadu, decades back, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker had argued that the morally ambiguous episodes such as the killing of Bali, Ram's harsh treatment of Sita and the mutilation of Surpanakha constitute the real core of Ramayana. His forceful critique of Hinduism, especially the worship of Ram, establishes Ram as a technique of 'subjugating South Indians.' This is the reason why EV glorifies Ravan as an epitome of Dravidian culture.

Closer to the Hindu heartland itself, Advani's Ram is not happily the same as Gandhiji's Ram or Ram Raj: 'The Rama of whom we sing is not the Rama of Valmiki or even the Rama of Tulsi... This Rama is not Dasaratha's son or Sita's consort. In fact, he is the disembodied Rama. This Rama is not the one born on the 9th day of the month of the Chaitra in a given year. He is birthless. He is the creator, the Lord of the Universe.' (*Harijan*, March 30, 1928).

If Ram and Ramayana constitute the mainstay of Hindu ethos—and the BJP and its allies certainly believe so—the core of that tradition is missing in their attempt at the ideological transformation of India. What is the core? It is a fluid diversity. There are several Rams, several Ramayanas. It is a multiplicity of options, a plurality of understandings. It is a resilient form of resistance against any one dominant version of reality. Dubashi's swadeshi capitalism and Advani's cultural nationalism rely on the liberation of the Hindu spirit perhaps. But they don't have a clue to the protean nature of that spirit. It eludes the grip of any single mould. The BJP's efforts are towards a monolithic unity of the Hindu mind. Advani does not lose his sleep over the details of differences that make up the Ramayana tradition. It is a fearful world of one-dimensional semantics

that the BJP is working towards. A world where each word has just one fixed, regimented meaning. A world of one-to-one correspondence. A world made simple; the word made simple. This part of the programme is brought to you by the Sangh Parivar. The clarity of thought that Advani flaunts at the TV cameras stems from the deeply ingrained notion of a one-dimensional world. All problems have a solution; the Hindu solution. Where simplicity abounds, no sweat breaks. The catch is that the Hindu is a composite problem rather than a standardised solution.

That is why the BJP and its allies are going to face trouble sooner than they expect. When a hundred Hindu subjects ask the question 'which Ram,' sweat will break over a brow or two and then blood. A sustained attempt to impose homogeneity on a naturally pluralistic tradition must result in great violence. And once that happens, the economic resurgence Dubashi is talking about—a resurgence in any case incapable of incorporating the true Hindu ethos—and the proud cultural nationalism of Advani will, if they take off at all, increasingly resort to force in the name of discipline. It is a fearful future; many Hindus are already dead in it. But that is in the future. For the present, Advani is still cool, quiet order moving about in human form. The no-sweat man. He is the one. In time. Release us into lunacy; thy hand, great anarchy.

Advani Claims Government May Ban BJP From Elections

93AS0674C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
12 Mar 93 p 4

[Article: "Government Trying to Bar BJP From Polls"]

[Text] New Delhi, March 11 (PTI): The leader of the Opposition, Mr L. K. Advani, today feared that his party might be "prevented from participating in elections."

Reacting to the Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao's reply to the motion of thanks on the presidential address in the Lok Sabha, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader felt that the law might be amended to prevent the BJP from participating in elections.

Talking to newsmen after his party walked out of the Lok Sabha before the motion was put to vote, he said the Prime Minister's reply showed the "siege mentality" of the ruling party and the party was launching a "campaign to revile the BJP."

There was a "clear parallel in the Prime Minister's reply to what prevailed in 1976," when Mrs Indira Gandhi had brought forward the 42nd Constitution Amendment incorporating the words "secular and socialism." There was no need to include the word secular in the Constitution.

Mr Advani said his party stood unequivocally for the concept of secularism as envisaged by the framers of the

Constitution, and not what the Congress conceptualised. A person could be religious but not communal, he said.

Reacting to the Prime Minister's declaration in Parliament today that he would seek to prevent political parties from mixing religion and politics, the BJP senior leader in Rajya Sabha, Mr J. P. Mathur, said his party also believed that politics and religion should not mix, but the government was seeking to take anti-democratic and anti-Constitutional steps, our correspondent adds.

"These are the government's desperate attempts to protect itself from the growing strength of the BJP. In their desperation, the rulers are becoming despots. The government is seeking means to debar the BJP from contesting elections," Mr Mathur said.

CPM Said Banning BJP April Rallies

93AS0674B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
12 Mar 93 p 7

[Article: "WP Bans All BJP Rallies"]

[Text] Calcutta, March 11: The state government will not allow the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to organise an open rally at the Brigade Parade Ground on April 11, the state information minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, said here today.

Mr Bhattacharya told newsmen the government would also not permit the BJP to organise any meeting or procession throughout the state any more. He initially cited the same reasons for which the Centre had banned the BJP rally at the Boat Club in Delhi on February 25, but when asked to be more specific, said: "We consider the BJP a communal party and we don't want it to vitiate the communal amity in our state."

Asked whether the government would allow the BJP to hold closed-door meetings, the information minister said, "We will consider it." On whether the government will permit the BJP's three-day national executive meeting to be held from April 9 to April 11, Mr Bhattacharya, however, said, "If the meeting is held closed-door, it is okay by us."

A delegation of the state BJP leaders, who earlier met the chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, over the issue, however, got an entirely different impression. According to Mr Anindya Gopal Mitra, Mr Sukumar Banerjee and Col. Sabyasachi Bagchi, three BJP leaders who met the chief minister, Mr Basu was non-committal on the matter, saying he would take a decision only after meeting the Prime Minister, Mr Narasimha Rao, on April 15. The chief minister is leaving for Delhi on April 14 and is expected back in the city on April 17.

The state BJP president, Mr Tapan Sikdar, said, "We don't attribute any importance to what Mr Bhattacharya has told the Press. Our party representatives today met the chief minister, who promised to clarify the position on his return from Delhi on April 17." Asked what the

BJP intended to do if the state government did not allow the party to hold the Brigade parade Ground rally, Mr Sikdar said, "We will chalk out our course of action only when the state government inform us of its stand."

The hardening in the state CPI(M)'s [Communist Party of India-Marxist] attitude vis-a-vis the BJP comes in the wake of the postponement of the Tripura Assembly polls and the AIDMK's [All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] snapping of ties with the Congress(I). The Union home minister, Mr S. B. Chavan's announcement in the Parliament yesterday that he would urge the AIDMK government not to allow the BJP to hold a public meeting in Madras on March 21 has naturally not escaped the state government's notice.

The state government's announcement today was obviously intended to pre-empt a similar kind of move on the part of the Centre before April 11.

RSS Strategy Viewed in Light of Ban

93AS0673C New Delhi *INDIA TODAY* in English
14 Feb 93 p 55

[Article by L. Rattanani and Y. Ghimire: "Manning All Battle Stations"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] It is 6.30 p.m. Balasaheb Deoras walks slowly from the corner of the light green Hedgewar Bhavan, headquarters of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh] in Nagpur. The 78-year-old Sarsanghachalak of the RSS is helped to the courtyard for a breath of fresh air by personal assistant Shrikant Joshi on one side and a walking stick on the other.

Seated in the yard, a shawl draped around him to ward off the Vidarbha chill, Deoras is oblivious to the raucous din of young neighbours at Bhatkas Chowk, playing football in the ground before him. The ailing RSS chief, propped up by two daily shots of insulin and a careful diet, meets very few people. Definitely not the press. "No interviews," says Shrikant Joshi, one of the 20-member RSS national executive. "If he meets one, he has to meet others." Under the doctor's advice, Deoras has not stirred out of the headquarters since November 6. His last major programme was the all-India meeting of the RSS in Ujjain in October last year. Quick to clarify doubts, pracharak Ramchandra Prahlad Deo says: "His brain is alert. He is the head of the organisation. Everybody consults him."

But the flow of visitors to meet Deoras is reduced to a trickle now. Ever since the ban on the organisation, that is. A strange silence has descended on Hedgewar Bhavan. Outside, police tents have been pitched and two shifts of 12 police personnel ensure visitors are kept to a minimum. A written clearance from the police is also mandatory. "They wanted to keep the gate closed. We objected. It is not necessary," says an RSS activist.

But the silence is deceptive. Guidelines still go out to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], VHP [Vishwa Hindu

Parishad], and others of the brotherhood from here. The RSS clearly is not letting the ban cramp its activities. "A special body will be formed to carry on our daily work in the name of Shri Ram Sevak Sangh," says Shrikant Joshi. "RSS" once again, except for the prefix 'Shri.' This body has not yet been formed, but when it is 'RSS' members will function from separate offices.

The RSS intends to counter the Government at every step. Following the ban, the 'gurudakshina'—the annual contribution made by RSS members to the guru to keep the organisation running smoothly—made in September was frozen. But the RSS is confident of keeping up the fund flow. "We will get money from our members. We are not like political parties. Our people are committed to the RSS," says a pracharak.

Post-ban, the RSS expects its ranks to swell. Members recall that at the time of the 1948 ban there were 3,500 branches all over the country, concentrated in the north and Maharashtra. After the ban, the RSS expanded its influence southward. In 1975, there were 11,000 branches. The ban during the Emergency gave it a massive boost and today there are 30,000 branches country-wide. The target now is 50,000. Says Narayan Vishwanath Tharte, who joined the RSS in 1930: "We will surely achieve this target."

The strategists haven't wasted any time in hitting the ground running. Immediately after Advani's arrest, the Sangh decided that except for half a dozen of its top leaders—including Deoras, H. V. Seshadri, Rajendra Singh and Moropant Pingle—the others would evade arrest and work on a combat plan. Already, die-hard cadres are activating other frontal organisations to serve as convenient meeting places for Sangh leaders to chalk out an action plan and implement the planned agitation:

—The ABVP [Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad] and Janata Yuva Morcha, which have a combined membership of 15 lakh, will provide the main muscle power for street-level agitational politics. These two bodies will be active under RSS leaders K. P. Sudershan, Bal Apte, Madan Das, Sushil Modi and Raj Kumar Bhatia.

—RSS pracharaks have been loaned to Vidya Bharati, the Sangh's education arm which runs about 5,000 schools with a strength of 12 lakh students and 40,000 teachers. Headed by Lajjaram Tomar, a senior pracharak, the front's activities are unhindered by the ban.

—The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh led by another RSS ideologue, Dattopant Thengri, has about 30 lakh members and 2,400 trade unions affiliated to it. In terms of size, it is next only to the Congress(I)-controlled INTUC [Indian National Trade Union Congress].

—The Vanbasi Kalyan Sangh has a presence in nearly 31,000 predominantly tribal villages. Its central office in Delhi, run by Rama Rao, is a convenient meeting-point for RSS strategists.

—The Seva Bharati's activities are targeted at slum dwellers. It has 10,000 centres and 3,500 welfare schemes which have even received cash awards and certificates of merit from the Central Government.

RSS heads in the states have also been asked to reactivate the Sangh units at the panchayat, block, district and state levels so that communication becomes easier and a strict chain of command is maintained.

RSS members, veterans of several past bans, are clearly in action mode. The ban, for them, poses only a minor stumbling block. VHP activist Umesh Sharma points to its futility: "When there are 50 doors, what is the use of closing one?"

BJP's Claims of Massive Temple Destruction Questioned

93AS0628D Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Feb 93 p 8

[Text] An important ingredient of the Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP] propaganda counter-offensive after the demolition of the Babri Masjid has been the charge of large-scale destruction of Hindu temples in Kashmir by Muslim fundamentalists. Though the party has raised the spectre of militancy haunting and demolishing temples in Kashmir ever since the current phase of terrorism started in Kashmir, an added thrust was given to the charge in the post-Ayodhya situation because by counterposing the alleged Kashmir incidents with the destruction of the mosque, the party hoped to question the credibility of the national response to the latter and even lend justification to the vandalism at Ayodhya. An eye for an eye, just one masjid—not even that, but only a cement and brick structure—for so many temples: isn't everybody who shuts his eye on Kashmir but cries hoarse over Ayodhya anything but a hypocrite? The argument is powerful but unfortunately it is not supported by facts. The party's leaders, especially Mr. L.K. Advani who has dwelt on the temple destruction theme more stridently than others, have given different figures for the number of temples destroyed, haven't cared to properly identify the temples and generally not co-operated with those who wanted to check the facts independently. And the facts present a different picture.

Journalist B.G. Varghese went to Kashmir and visited the places in the lists given to him by a senior RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] leader and a BJP front-line body and found that 38 religious places had been damaged between 1989 and 1991. But the 38 included 22 temples and 16 mosques and dargas. More importantly, he established that the damage was the result of skirmishes between security forces and militants and not of wanton acts of communal rancour. An INDIA TODAY team that recently visited the Valley also

reached the same conclusion. It found that 21 of the 23 temples named by the BJP as having been destroyed or damaged are entirely safe; it has also given photographic evidence of its findings. When Mr. Advani's attention was drawn to the findings of the magazine, he refused to answer any more questions on the subject. But will he and other BJP leaders stop making the same charges from the public platform? Possibly not, because they know that the overwhelming majority of their listeners are not aware that they are selling untruth. And the party will still call itself a responsible Opposition party.

Open Letter to THE STATESMAN Editor Condemnatory

93AS0673B New Delhi ORGANISER in English
28 Feb 93 pp 11, 14

[Article by A. K. Chatterjee: "The Voice of the Hindu"; quotation marks, italicized words as published]

[Text]

An Open Letter to Mr. C. R. Irani Dear Mr. Irani,

I wonder if you would find any space for this letter. I say so because the Hindu viewpoint is simply shut out. But if you are a man of courage and honesty, Mr. Irani, please do give us a chance and treat us at par with our "voice of India's future."

The Voice of India's Future that found pride of place in the front page of your paper (13.12.92) betray total misconception of historical, cultural, national and moral issues involved in the event. Since the letter represents, as you rightly say, "a cry from the heart" of two young students, one is saddened to realise that our young people, though intelligent and sensitive, are carried away by slogan-mongering. The young ladies know that the Babri was a 'mosque' but they don't seem to know what it was doing at Ramkot in Ayodhya.

Why did we demolish the Babri 'mosque,' Mr. Irani? Ask any nation wronged by history and they will give you the answer. Why did Christian Europe launch the crusades and fought a bloody communal war with Muslims for 400 years? Was it not just to recover the holy Christian shrines that had been usurped by the sword of Islam centuries ago? Why did the Spaniards launch their 14th century Reconquesta, recapture their Shrines seized by Islam and restore them to their original sanctity and glory?

Coming closer to our own times, why is Rigoberta Menchu fighting to remove statues of Columbus from public squares in Latin American towns? Why did we, in this very country, remove the statues of Robert Clive, Sir James Outram, Queen Victoria and King George V from their lofty pedestals and majestic canopies in the city squares? Were they more humiliating than Babur's mosque? To atone for the wrong of history, did not the Germans apologize to the Jews after the second world war and pay them ample reparations? Did not the

Soviets apologize to the Koreans in 1990 for having started the Korean war way back in 1950? Has not Japan begged pardon from China this year for having used her women as "comfort girls" for Japanese soldiers 50 years ago? In 1989, the Soviet authorities acknowledged their guilt in the Katyn massacre of Polish officials during the war, and made amends by expressing regret and holding a ceremony at the site with Polish authorities. In the same year, the Japanese apologized to the Koreans for having occupied their country 44 years ago. The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa publicly asked Black people for forgiveness for the ideological support it had once given to apartheid. In 1990, the US Government tendered apology to her Japanese people for having pre-emptively arrested them and put in concentration camps during the world war II.

So, every people have a right to righting of historical wrongs suffered by it. Except, that is, we the Hindus. The horrible crimes, atrocities and tyranny that Islam has committed against the Hindu nation has no parallel in the history of the world. Yet no one concedes us even the right of a symbolic redressal. Not the Muslims, nor the Indian state, nor the Indian intelligentsia and nor your Voice of the Future. Why, Mr. Irani? Are we Hindus a case apart?

For fifty years, we knocked at the door of the 'secularist' regime and judiciary with the meanest of request: give us justice. We won't damage the structure, let them take it elsewhere, we shall ourselves re-erect it for them, just let us have our sacred land. But all in vain. You had no ears for the voice of the Hindu. And now, when finally we lost patience and exercised our indisputable cultural right, you break loose all hell on us. Fanatics, fundamentalists, chauvinists, communalists, lumpen vandals, God knows what else you heap on us.

Let the young ladies suffer no self-pity, for the Hindu does not have to prove his tolerance by surrendering his national honour. Our tolerance is ingrained in our basic philosophy of pantheism. Hinduism does not divide human beings between the faithful and the infidel, between the chosen one and the despised one, between those destined for paradise and those for the inferno. Our tolerance is contained in the unique element of our faith that regards every religion as a true path to the Deity. We proved our tolerance 2000 years ago when the Romans destroyed the holy temple of the Jews and we gave shelter to the Jewish refugees with freedom to practise their faith. We proved our tolerance when the frightened Zoroastrians fled from Persia under the oppression of the Islamic hordes. We took them to our bosom as brothers and gave protection to their form of worship. We proved our tolerance when Thomas the Cananus (trader) came to the shores of our country from Mesopotamia in the 4th century AD with a handful of his oppressed kinsmen and we let him set up his Syrian church and practise his faith. We proved our tolerance when in spite of 700 years of its terrible oppression, we allowed Islam to survive as a religion in this country with

full freedom and dignity even after we had thrown away the yoke of its imperialist domination.

Has the Hindu ever obstructed an ordinary Muslim in building his mosque on a neutral piece of land? Or to scream his daily calls to prayer, to congregate for his Friday mass, to observe his fasts and celebrate his festivals? Has the Hindu ever imposed his own norms on followers of other faith? Has he ever tried to convert others to his own creed? No, Mr. Irani, he has not. A Hindu has enough to show for his tolerance over 2000 years of history.

And yet your young ladies feel outraged. They think they have heard the death-knell of Hindu tolerance merely because we did not treat Babur's offending 'mosque' as sacrosanct. Do you young ladies think we now have to prove our tolerance by glorifying the victory monuments of barbaric invaders who destroyed our temples, desecrated our deities, burnt our scriptures, plundered our wealth, sacked our cities, torched our villages, butchered our men, dishonoured our women, sold our children in slavery and coerced our people, under pain of death, to convert to an alien culture? Do we have to prove our tolerance by showing reverence to their 'shrines' under the steps and across the thresholds of which are buried broken images of hundreds of our gods and goddesses in order that the 'faithful' may trample upon them every time they go to their prayer? Would that be tolerance?

There have been cases of horrendous riots both inside and outside the country. We too grieve for the lives that are lost, for the houses that are burnt and for the families which are rendered homeless. We share the anguish of the young ladies over these tragedies. But we feel an even greater sense of hurt that instead of blaming the aggressors, the Voice of the Future should seek to place the blame at the door of the victims. Is it we Hindus who destroyed over 300 temples in Pakistan, Bangladesh and UK? Or for that matter, gurdwaras in Britain, Buddhist pagodas in Bangladesh, and churches and Jain temples in Pakistan? Were they Hindu mobs that went on rampage to avenge the demolition of the Babri 'mosque' with murder, arson and plunder all over India and abroad? Let the facts be reported clearly, Mr. Irani. For every place, how did the riots start and who were the aggressors?

The Voice of the Future rubs salt into our wounds. We are the victims of the latest round of communal riots as we mostly had been in the past, (barring exceptions like the Bihar Sharif and Bhagalpur riots) ever since the publication of the *Lal Ishtehar* in Eastern Bengal in 1906.

The young ladies don't reflect on one simple thing. Had Hindus imbibed the same bestial spirit of retaliation, there would have by now been a torrent of terrorized Muslims migrating from India, just as Hindus and Sikhs have had to do from Kashmir and Afghanistan. Look to the pages of history, Mr. Irani and you will see, we Hindus never did to the Muslims or followers of any

other faith what Bangladesh has done to the Buddhist, what the Serbs have done to the Bosnians, what Ferdinand and Isabella had done to the Jews and what the Portuguese under the influence of Francis Xavier had done to the Hindus in Goa.

The young ladies ask us whether we want to have a Hindu state. Yes, Mr. Irani, we do. We Hindus are the oldest surviving nation on earth and this is our ancient land. Why should we not have a state of our own? If almost every country with a Muslim majority in population, even a paltry 54% majority, can be a Muslim (or Islamic) state, if the Jews can have a Jewish state, if the oldest democracy in the world can still retain Protestantism as her official religion, why is it that the idea of a Hindu state should be so obnoxious to the young ladies?

Clearly enough, they are oblivious of the teaching of Hinduism, of history of this country and realities of the world political order around them. Only a Hindu state can be, as it has always been in history, a state that tolerates religious diversities amongst its citizens. Only a Hindu state can practise complete religious freedom, for we the practitioners of the Sanatan Dharma believe that all modes of worship are equally true, that all paths lead to the same God as rivers meandering through different courses flow into the same ocean. In a Hindu state, there can be no majority or minority, for the state would not distinguish between citizens on the basis of their religious faith. It will be a state where all citizens will enjoy equal status and rights.

The young ladies show an appalling ignorance of tenets of Hinduism by asking what would happen to Muslims in a Hindu state. Hinduism is not a theological faith. It prescribes no religious laws for the individual. The despicable concept of theocracy is therefore alien to a Hindu state. A Hindu state would be unlike an Islamic or a Catholic State which are under theological obligation to discriminate against non-Muslims and non-Catholics. For whereas the doctrines of the latter preach exclusive righteousness of their own respective creed, prophet and Book, the Hindu thought yields no place to such exclusivism.

If the young ladies are still not convinced, Mr. Irani, let them simply know that minorities exist and survive in all countries. They don't have to be thrown out. Just as non-Shintos are surviving in Japan, Muslims and Catholics in UK, Christians and Shias in Iraq, non-Catholics in Italy, so will Muslims survive in the Hindu state of India. In fact they would surely survive with much greater human dignity, freedom, equality and honour than do the Ahmedias in Pakistan, Kurds in Iraq, and Hindus, Christians and Buddhists in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia and all other Islamic states.

And this is more than what Muslims of India had aspired to get after they got their own state of Pakistan carved out in 1947 and yet decided to stay on in this country. Let the young ladies see the evidence of Muslim leaders

before Justice Munir Commission constituted in Pakistan after the anti-Ahmedia riots of 1955. **Deposition after deposition before that commission said that they expected that Hindus would have a Hindu State in Hindusthan and Muslims who choose to live in that country should reconcile themselves to live as second class citizens without equal rights and dignity, the same as Hindus should do in Pakistan.**

The unpleasant reality is, Mr. Irani, that only a Hindu state can lift us from the morass we are in at present. Your 'secularism' has a dismal record of 45 years. What has it achieved for this great ancient nation? Your slogan *Mera Bharat Mahan* is hollow as a kettledrum. 'Secularism' has failed this country on every front. Look at our economy, our poverty and unemployment, our unchecked population growth, the state of our education and health, our industry and agriculture, our energy and power, our export and foreign exchange, our debts and deficits. Look at the culture of sychophancy and corruption that has gripped our country. Look at the scarcity of our moral courage. Look at the tragic want of motivation in our games and sports, our place in the comity of nations, our woeful image before the world.

We feel ashamed at what we have done to ourselves in 45 years in spite of political independence. And the chief culprit responsible for this sad state of affairs is 'secularism.' This concept has virtually acted as a policy of treason for this country. It has denied us our national identity and national pride. It has ignored the national culture of this ancient land, and has asked us to believe that we are the progeny of a bastard 'composite' culture. It has sought to blur the distinction between our heroes and our villains. It has equated our victories with defeats, our glory with shame, our enslavement with tolerance. It has treated at par golden chapters of our history with its blackest pages. Your 'secularism,' Mr. Irani, has denied us the Hindus, the mainstream of this great nation, equal constitutional rights. It has orphaned our society, undermined our civilisation, and discriminated against us in every sphere. It has treated us as less than human.

And what was the result? The nation was robbed of its prime source of inspiration, its self-confidence, its sense of national purpose and destiny. It has been forced to lose its moorings and suffer a drift. 'Secularism' has created a virtual nation within the nation that asserts its right to be above the law of the land. It has created a pampered minority group that can bully our leaders and dictate our national policies against the interests of the country. It has reduced us to a crowd without a common aspiration, a bunch of individuals alienated from society, full of inferiority complex, self-deprecating, apathetic, socially irresponsible, and without a cause on earth. In short, it has been our national suicide.

No, Mr. Irani, we have had enough of your 'secularism'. Let us now have our Hindu state, give us a chance to

shape our future and an opportunity to find our place under the sun. Therein would lie the Future of the Voice of India's future too.

Yours sincerely,

(A. K. Chatterjee)

To Mr. C. R. Irani Editor-in-chief THE STATESMAN
Calcutta/Delhi

Analyst Foresees More Movements Involving Temple Claims

93AS0673I Calcutta SUNDAY in English 7 Mar 93
pp 28-29

[Article by Swapan Dasgupta: "After Ayodhya, It's Kashi, Mathura"]

[Text] Over the past four years or so, I have encountered scores of well-meaning individuals who have questioned the rationale of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement for reasons that have nothing to do with secularism. Besides suggesting that Ram is an unlikely national hero and that Ayodhya never figured among the really major pilgrimage centers, the critics of Ram Janmabhoomi leave themselves a convenient escape route. "Now, if the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] was to concentrate on Kashi," they retort, "it would be a very different story altogether." In a similar vein, reporters covering Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have often indicated the explosive potential of any future movement for reclaiming Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura.

The temptations of widening the scope of the temple movement to include Mathura and Kashi need not be overemphasized. Even if history is somewhat unclear over the precise nature of the 11th century temple in Ayodhya which was destroyed by Mir Baqi to make way for the Babri Masjid, there is not even a shred of ambiguity surrounding Aurangzeb's vandalism in Mathura and Kashi. The destruction of these shrines has been faithfully documented in contemporary records. And in the case of Kashi, sections of the old Vishwanath temple were deliberately left standing next to the Gyanvapi mosque as a symbol of Mogul arrogance. The ruins constitute a powerful monument of medieval bigotry and an affront to the multitudes who visit Varanasi each year.

It is important to stress the existence of these two shrines of contention, not least because of a real apprehension that after Ayodhya the triumphant sadhus will shift their attention to Mathura and Kashi. The fears acquire a menacing urgency because of Ashok Singhal's reiteration that the outlawed Vishwa Hindu Parishad has not forgotten the slogan: *Ye to pahli jhanki hai, Mathura, Kashi baaki hai.* Nor are fears allayed by the symbolism of Murli Manohar Joshi and L.K. Advani starting the last leg of their journey to Ayodhya from Mathura and Kashi respectively. Moreover, when the debate over the constitutional reference of the Ayodhya dispute to the Supreme Court was heating up prior to 6 December,

Advani did suggest that the government should also refer the Mathura and Kashi disputes to arbitration.

Disclaimers by senior BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders to the effect that Mathura and Kashi are not on the party's agenda "as yet" should not detract from the fact that there is real pressure on the party to incorporate these disputes in its post-Ayodhya agenda. Apart from these base electoral calculations such as the positive impact of Mathura on the Yadavs and other backward castes and the wide appeal of Shaivite sects in south India, there is a frenzied desire on the part of a minority of militant Hindus to avenge past humiliation in toto. Sadhvi Rithambhara may be the most vocal representative of this aggressive streak, but I have little doubt that there are many "moderate" Hindus who returned incensed from each visit to Varanasi.

Secularist taunts merely reinforce the subliminal aggression. If *kar sevaks* were provoked into taking the law into their own hands on 6 December, by slogans such as "*sarkar to ab teri, mandir mein kyon deri*," there are others who are likely to be goaded into extremism by baseless allegations of uppercaste bias of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. My friend, Arvind N. Das may yet regret the curious charge he leveled against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP): "Ram is dearer to Mr. Advani because he was a Kshatriya. On the other hand, Shiva was a mountain-dwelling Kirata, while Krishna, a great warrior, enlightened teacher, and indeed a divine incarnation, had Yadava (OBC) origins. Lower-caste Hindu who have suffered centuries of iniquity found that discrimination even extended to their Gods."

Nor are matters helped when "secular fundamentalists" (Mani Shankar Aiyar's self-description at a recent seminar organized by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in Delhi) take it upon themselves to use Muslims as cannon fodder for their own ideological crusade. In October 1990, a fortnight or so before the explosive in Ayodhya, Advani made an appeal—after consulting a handful of top RSS leaders—to Muslims to abandon their claims on the shrine in Ayodhya. In return, he assured the community, he would use his good offices to persuade the VHP and the *sants* to preserve the status quo in all other disputed shrines.

Predictably, the offer was dismissed with contempt, not least because the secularists genuinely believed that Mulayam Singh Yadav's big stick would resolve the issue once and for all. Even when the not-a-bird-will-enter-Ayodhya bluff was successfully called, the secularists set themselves up as the voice of obduracy. An editorial in THE HINDU was indicative of their willful combativeness: "No formula that envisages the destruction of the Babri Masjid should be seriously entertained even if the Muslim community leaders decide that it would be all right for them to trade the mosque for an undertaking that no more of their shrines will be held hostage" (6 December, 1990).

It is necessary to highlight these aspects of secularist perfidy in the context of the reiteration of the old Advani formula by the noted Islamic scholar, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, and other concerned Muslim individuals such as Rashid Talib. The Maulana has also proposed that in response to a Muslim gesture on Ayodhya, the *sangh parivar* endorse a move to elevate the Places of Worship Act of 1991 to a constitutional amendment. By this line of reasoning the demolition in Ayodhya, far from initiating a fresh round of Hindu-Muslim conflict, will pave the way for a historic concordat.

As of now, the Maulana's proposal has received only a muted endorsement, not least because both sides are wary of the gesture being interpreted as capitulation. Certainly there is much more groundwork to be done before each side is convinced of the other's security. But what is curious is the near-deafening silence from our secularist crusades to the proposal.

At one level, they are naturally loath to admit that they were wrong and that Advani was right in 1990. More important, however, is the alarm that the self-generating hype over an emerging "anti-fascist" struggle will simply dissipate if the proposed reconstruction of a mosque in Ayodhya becomes a non-starter. Where will that leave the people's movement for secularism, the torchlight processionists, the petitionwallahs and those who scream "*sharm se kahon hum Hindu hain?*"

K.C. Pant Addresses State Transportation Issues

93AS0628G Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
5 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by K.C. Pant, Chairman of Tenth Finance Commission, in New Delhi]

[Text] The Tenth Finance Commission is required to make recommendations on the sharing of certain taxes between the Union and the states and to recommend grants-in-aid to states out of the resources of the Union. The Commission is thus expected to look at both vertical and horizontal equity, that is, as between the Union and the states and between the states, inter se.

The Commission has been entrusted with the task, inter alia, of examining the question of fiscal deficit, surplus on revenue account to facilitate capital investment, and fiscal efficiency. While making its recommendations, the Commission has been specifically asked to look into the need for ensuring reasonable returns on investments in state road transport undertakings, (SRTUs), departmental commercial undertakings, public sector enterprises and major capital works.

The country is passing through a difficult phase with the financial position of the Central and state governments in need of firm correctives. Major problems of fiscal and economic management stare us in the face. The burgeoning public debt, the continuing balance of payments crisis, and inflationary pressures are causes for concern.

In this background, correcting fiscal imbalance is perhaps the most important task of economic management in India. Unfortunately, one distressing feature of the state finances is the emergence of a substantial and growing volume of revenue deficits in recent years.

The performance of SRTUs and a positive return from them is a matter of special interest to the Finance Commission. The importance of this matter becomes even more pronounced in the light of the investment of approximately Rs [Rupees] 4,000 crore by the Union and the state governments put together in the SRTUs. But, in spite of this heavy investment, in the year 1991-92 only the Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation and Anna and Pandiyan Companies of Tamil Nadu have reported profit. The Ninth Finance Commission, while examining returns from investments in the RTUs, had observed that though there were certain constraints within which these undertakings had to operate, they had to come out of the present plight through an improvement in the management systems. The investments in SRTUs have a very short gestation period. There is also greater scope in manoeuvring transport operations to meet temporary or even day-to-day situations. The Ninth Finance Commission, considering all these factors and the fact that the capital contribution to the SRTUs comes mainly out of borrowed funds, which were becoming costlier year after year, recommended that for non-hill states a return ranging from one per cent in 1990-91 rising to 6.5 per cent in 1994-95 should be ensured. In respect of the hill states and the hilly areas of other states, the Ninth Finance Commission recommended that these transport undertakings should at least provide for depreciation in full, after meeting their working expenses. But, as you know, the SRTUs have fallen far short of these expectations. The estimated net losses in 1990-91 were Rs 354.99 crore and in 1991-92 Rs 401 crore. I would like to have your assessment of the anticipated operational results during the current year.

The performance levels of the SRTUs show wide variations. For instance, fuel efficiency measured in terms of kilometres per litre of diesel consumption (KMPL) in one SRTU is above five and in another, close to five. But there are quite a few SRTUs where KMPL has remained below four. The implications of this low KMPL are indeed enormous. Taking the example of a particular SRTU for the quarter July to September, 1992, it has been noted that it operated 773 lakh km at an average KMPL of 3.65. If its fuel performance had been even 4.5 KMPL, it would have saved approximately 40 lakh litres of HSD [expansion not given] worth Rs 2.5 crore. In a year it would have meant a saving of about Rs 10 crore and would have radically changed its financial performance.

In terms of fleet utilisation, again, there is a wide variation ranging from as high as 93 per cent to as low as 39 per cent. In regard to vehicle utilisation, that is the distance covered, the variations are as wide as 369 km per bus per day to 75 km per bus per day, in more or less

similar operating conditions. The staff per bus ratio on road also varies significantly from 5.4 to 18.4. It is thus evident that there is considerable scope for improvement in the physical performance of SRTUs, which would immediately result in improving their financial performance.

There is also the question of subsidies in fares arising out of social obligations cast on the SRTUs. The burden, for instance, on account of concessional fares offered by the SRTUs of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh works out to Rs 136 crore for the year 1991-92. While some subsidies may be necessary, there is a clear case for having a fresh look at them. Similarly, the question of unremunerative fares, evasion of passenger fares and taxes, better maintenance of vehicles, etc., also need your consideration. I will be grateful to have your views on these issues.

Another factor which has been casting further financial burden on SRTUs is the increasing number of accidents and consequential rise in MACT [expansion not given] payments by them. Since a majority of accidents are caused by bad driving, it is essential to impart proper training to the drivers and then to insist on safe driving. At the same time, there is need for strengthening the system of issuing driving licences in such a way that one person cannot take driving licences from more than one authority, through concealment or misstatement of facts. As a step in this direction, computerisation of driving licences and incorporating the accident record of drivers should be introduced and linked up with all the states on a national network...

These are some of the issues and problems on which we would be happy to get your views and suggestions as these have a bearing on the question of ensuring reasonable returns on investment in SRTUs. Keeping these in view, may I suggest that we may focus on the following issues, among others:

- i) The need for fixing a reasonable return on investments in SRTUs; ii) Structural readjustment in future investment patterns in public road transport facilities; iii) Maintenance of highways and other roads and their impact on bus transport; iv) Sales tax and other barriers and their impact on smooth flow of traffic and POL [Petroleum Oil and Lubricants] consumption; and v) Scope for privatisation of STUs without giving up the socio-economic obligations.

Controversial Case Involving Muslim Law Reaches Courts

93AS0673G Bombay *THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 5 Mar 93 p 18

[Article by Saibal Dasgupta: "One More Shah Bano"]

[Text] Two months after the demolition of the Babri masjid a section of the Muslim leadership began to see a glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel. "We are aware of the challenges it has posed. And Insh'allah we

will turn the Ayodhya incident into a catalyst that will bring about wide-ranging changes in Muslim society," Kazi Muzahdul Islam, an important member of the seven-member Babri Masjid Committee of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board had said.

That was before another bombshell dropped. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court allowed the plea of a divorced Muslim woman, Hamidan, to claim maintenance from her ex-husband after the period of *iddat*. In one go the verdict wiped out the advantages that the Muslim clergy had squeezed out of an indecisive Rajiv Gandhi government who had gotten Parliament to pass the Muslim Women (protection of rights on divorce) Bill in 1986. The act undid the Supreme Court's Shah Bano judgment which allowed Muslim women the benefit of maintenance on divorce. The 1986 act restricted the maintenance to the period of *iddat*, the three months and ten days span needed for three menstrual cycles to ascertain whether the concerned woman was pregnant at the time of divorce, as per the Shariat laws.

And now comes the Allahabad high court judgment of February 10. By allowing Hamidan maintenance beyond the period of *iddat*, the judgment virtually locked horns with the 1986 act. In any other situation, the Muslim clergy would have cried bloody murder. But today they are left squirming in discomfort. The BJP is jubilant. Murli Manohar Joshi waxed eloquent on the plight of Muslim women at the hands of the ruthless Muslim clergy who used the Shariat to cloak their selfish narrow-minded motives. Muslims should reject their leaders he pronounced. Pro-Hindutva journalists made Hamidan an instant media celebrity with Hindi papers carrying interviews and reports on her.

Supporters of the pristine glory of Hinduism, including those who swear by the Manu Smriti, suddenly took up cudgels on behalf of Muslim women. It is this ability of the Hindutva leadership to exploit the Hamidan issue, that the Muslim leaders fear most.

"We do not want to join the controversy. It will only distract our energies from the Babri masjid issue. We will be playing into the hands of the BJP if we do that," said Kazi Muzahdul Islam. The Personal Law Board has quietly referred the matter to its Legal Aid Committee and left it to decide on whether the board should take it up. Trying to buy time, of course.

But it could already be too late. The first stone has already been cast, the ripple effect set in motion. This was done by the vice-president of the Personal Law Board, Maulana Kalbe Sadiq, before leaving for a junket to Kenya. Maulana Sadiq who could not give up his preoccupations abroad to attend the first meeting of the Babri Masjid Committee on 20 February in Lucknow, declared that the board will take up the cause of the aggrieved husband Rafiq Ahmed. "The court judgment is against the spirit of the Shariat," the Shia leader declared. Inquiries with three other members of the board revealed that the matter had not been discussed at

any level by the board. "What Maulana Sadiq said could be his own opinion. We have received the copy of the judgment only yesterday. We will refer it to our Legal Aid Committee which will take the final decision," said Maulana Syed Nizamuddin, the board's general secretary, when contacted on 20 February in Lucknow.

For Hamidan, it has been 16 long years of a frustrating battle in court, exasperating trips to different lawyers' offices and a lonely battle against society. "I often felt like giving up. But a look at my children, at what they have had to undergo, gave me renewed strength," she says sitting in the jute-covered hovel that is her home.

Hamidan is a rebel. So was Shah Bano. To Hamidan goes the distinction of exposing a mammoth lie perpetuated by the so-called upholders of the Shariat. By proving in court that even here divorce was not in accordance with the principles of the Shariat, she showed how the religious law is being violated by those who regard secular and liberal opinion on the status of women as an attack on the Shariat. "We will certainly look into this aspect. If the divorce was not given according to the principles of the Shariat we will not take up the husband's side," Maulana Nizamuddin said.

True, the Shariat regards marriage as a contract that can be made and terminated with either spouse having no responsibility towards the other after divorce. But doesn't Islam also teach justice and preach a generosity of spirit? Isn't the Muslim system of marriage and divorce loaded against women in a society that is male-dominated and where women are both largely illiterate and non-economic producers? Maybe the Muslim clergy will rethink the matter in the light of provisions in Islam for emergency situations.

Most Muslim leaders feel that the issue has cropped up at the wrong time. At a time when the community needs to wage the larger battle of safeguarding its very identity. And yet the Hamidan controversy has erupted at the right time. What could be a more opportune time than this, when the community is going through a process of introspection? How can a battle for Muslim identity leave out that of its women? This may indeed be the hour for the community to take a fresh look at the root cause—religious versus secular law. After all, the framers of the Indian Constitution had cast aside the tenets of the Manu Smriti and the Hindu community has accepted it without much complaint. If the Muslim leadership sticks to the no-change syndrome they would be no different from the sants of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad who demand a Hindu constitution.

Muslim Leadership Said Confused, Directionless
93AS0666C New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 1 Mar 93
p 6

[Article by Mohammad Aslam Hadi: "Now Remove This Burqa"]

[Text] This fact is hard to accept. The Hindu extremists did a favor to the Muslims by destroying the Babri Masjid structure. The whole Muslim politics revolved around it as long as it was erect. No Muslim leader felt that the Indian Muslims had problems other than the Babri Masjid. Some leaders like Javed Habib did say occasionally that the Muslim leaders should also pay attention to illiteracy and poverty among the Muslims. However, whoever looked at the Muslim politics, found it to be revolving around Babri Masjid. Liberal Muslim leaders and intellectuals tried hard to move the focus of Muslim politics from Babri Masjid to the main basic and real needs of the Muslims. However, the Babri committees of Syed Shahabuddin and Abdullah Bukhari never paid any attention to it.

Babri Masjid was torn down right in the front of the scholars of Muslim politics. The status quo on Babri Masjid has ended, but the status quo of the Muslim leaders remains. Javed Habib did [cite the poem], "He quit perfidy after I was murdered." He would have been unhappy if they were still fighting the war for Babri Masjid. They are actually fighting for their chairs. This struggle is between Shahabuddin and Abdullah Bukhari.

The RSS [Rashtriya Swayemsevak Sangh] family has blackened the alabaster face of Muslim politics by destroying the structure of Babri Masjid. Syed Shahabuddin, Abdullah Bukhari, Sulayman Sait, Salauddin Ovesi, Javed Habib, Azam Khan, and Jafferyab Jailaini are afraid to show their faces now. All of them are hiding in their coops. Some of them tried to speak using the excuse to worship, observe fast, or call for boycott on Republic Day. However, they had to hide back in their coops again. All of them are afraid that they may not be battered because of the stigma they brought on themselves. Shahabuddin tried to get rid of his embarrassment by demanding that all Muslim ministers, legislators, and council members resign from their positions. However, when the Muslim Personal Law Board hinted vaguely that it should be done, Shahabuddin became scared. All Muslim leaders have to understand that this blemish will not be wiped off easily. This stigma will be removed only when the leaders focus on removing illiteracy and social and economic backwardness among the Muslims.

Seeing the beautiful arena of Muslim politics deserted, the Muslim Personal Law Board tried to toot its own horn. However, it is at a loss what to do. The biggest problem Maulana Ali Mian faces is that most of his Board members are leaders of various Babri committees and have lost the support of the Muslims. Maulana Ali Mian is at that stage of his life where rarely anyone can remove the leaders of Babri committees and restructure the Board. Recently, there was dissension between the Babri committee of the Imam and the Personal Law Board over the question of boycotting the Republic Day. If we leave the average Muslims out, Ali Mian has no clout among the fundamentalist and liberal Muslims. What kind of leadership can Ali Mian assert in such a situation?

The Muslims in India are totally without a leader after the destruction of Babri Masjid. The Muslims have started to talk openly against their so-called leaders. This is a welcome beginning. Reconstruction can start only after destruction. Let us hope that a responsible leader who will focus on the real needs of Muslims and who will join them in the national mainstream emerges in the near future. This leader will make the Muslims aware of their historical leaders. He will tell them that Ram, Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Mahavir were not foreigners, that Hindus are their brothers, and that this country is also their own. The Muslims have begun to feel now that making Babri Masjid the symbol of Muslim prestige was a mistake. This is a major change.

Had a Muslim said before 6 December that Babri Masjid could be built in another place and let the Hindus keep this site of their worship, the protectors of Muslim politics and readers of Urdu newspapers would have been outraged. They would have said that a mosque is not a building that can be moved. A mosque is any place where one worships even once. The mosque extends from the nethermost part of the earth to the sky. They would have called the person who advised building the mosque elsewhere a kafir. Once I had asked why you call this place where they were singing Hindu hymns a mosque. The Muslim circles around me rose against me. Even my friends and relatives became angry at me.

The pre-6 December situation is changing now. All my friends and relatives who viewed Babri Masjid rising from the bottom of the earth to up in the sky are talking about leaving this debate right where it is. They are telling Syed Shahabuddin and Abdul Bukhari to leave them alone now in the name of God. The Muslim belief that the RSS cannot do any harm is broken. They were told that any action by the RSS would result in the arrival of armies from Pakistan and Afghanistan, and oil supply from the Gulf would stop. They were also told that the Hindus could not even control the few Sikhs. What would happen when millions of Muslim took arms against them? India was to be destroyed like Lebanon. We have to thank the Hindu dissidents who helped the Muslims learn about hard facts. The Muslims know that they have to live in this country. They have to give up some, be on their own, and trust Ram. The war against the RSS cannot be fought if they continue to oppose Ram also. They cannot defeat the RSS family without first seizing the arrow with Ram's name on it from them. If we stand by Ram, the RSS family cannot call the Muslims anti-Hindu, anti-national, and pro-Pakistan. If the Muslims want to protect themselves and the nation from the RSS family, they must emerge on the public platform and announce that Ram, Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Mahavir are also great heroes of the Muslims. No fascist will be able to abuse Ram's name for political gain after that.

The truth is that one's ancestors do not change if one changes one's beliefs, way of life, language, faith, philosophy, and religion. If either Ishwar Lal or Rehmat Ali's son changes religion and becomes Muslim or Hindu, will

the father of that person change his religion too? Blood, after all, is blood. Everything can change, blood cannot! This statement cannot be questioned. In this context, all Hindu religious deities are our historic figures. Therefore, the Hindus and Muslims should not fight over Ram. This country depends on the unity of Hindus and Muslims. If this source of unity is broken, the terrible waters of hatred will destroy this nation.

Sadhus Said Increasingly Involved in Politics

93AS0673H Bombay *THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 19 Feb 93 pp 8-9

[Article by Saibal Dasgupta: "A Tumeric Parliament?"]

[Text] Clipped mustache, bow tie, sola topi, a walking stick, and a three-piece suit. The black-and-white portrait that depicts the man in brown sahib attire along with an imperious-looking lady in an embroidered chiffon sari, her head slightly covered, and a stole across her body adorns one of the elite drawing rooms of Allahabad. "My parents," explains Usha Rani, sister of Ashok Singhal, the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] secretary general.

The portrait could be significant. It might form the backdrop of any future biography of Mr. Singhal whose political stars are on the ascent. Here is the son of a one-time bureaucrat of British India battling to liberate the nation from the symbols and social psyche of foreign rule, albeit the Mogul one. The latest of Mr. Singhal's maneuvers is to transform the hitherto autonomous All India Sant Samiti into an extension of the VHP under the new name of Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas Manch.

The scene is the Magh Mela on the banks of the Sangam in Allahabad. The spirit of the delegates at the Sant Sammelan [conference of saints] is akin to that of military officers of an advancing column holding a strategy session in the midst of war. Most delegates agree that they are close to victory. The Muslims have been shown their place in Ayodhya and Bombay. It is now time to consolidate and rule. Time for the war leaders to seize power, for sadhus to enter politics. Hence the resolution at the sammelan [conference] calling upon the inheritors of the rishis of yore to plunge into political activism.

The generosity of the victor comes through in BJP MP [member of Parliament] Mahant Avaidyanath's remarks: Muslims are free to live in Ayodhya. But no new mosque will be allowed to be built. "Much blood has been sacrificed in 1990. Crores of Hindus have contributed to the building of the Ram Mandir. The government cannot crush their sentiments and build a mosque in Ayodhya," roars the new lion in the hindutva [Hinduness] ring, a 24-year-old sanyasi named Vasudeva-charya.

The sadhus [religious Figures] have nearly made it. It is not merely a question of the Ram Mandir. The goal is

Hindu rashtra [nation], something most of the middle-class supporters of the mandir cause have not really understood. Hindu rashtra means sadhus as rulers. As members of parliament guiding the destinies of the nation in the same manner as the rishis in the golden era guided the kings. The message from the Sant Sammelan in Allahabad on January 24 and 25 is that the BJP must allocate a larger share of Assembly and Lok Sabha tickets to the saffron-robed aspirants in future elections.

In fact, the debate began three decades back when Sant Karpatriji Maharaj floated the Ram Rajya party. He did not see eye-to-eye with the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and even wrote a book explaining why the ideology of Guru Golwalkar is the very negation of Hinduism. That was back when the RSS stayed away from sadhus, even distrusted them while remaining engrossed in the character building of its cadre. But Karpatriji had initiated a debate, a campaign to put sadhus in Parliament. His party came close to power in Rajasthan, organised the gheraoing [blockading] of Parliament in New Delhi on the issue of cow slaughter and made quite a splash on the political scene.

If today the RSS has lifted the enemy's ideology and is pushing the sadhus to the forefront, it is apparently because it does not trust the BJP's ability to wrest power on its own steam. L.K. Advani might aver, as he did in Bombay recently, that the BJP's aim is not to create a Hindu version of Pakistan, but that is a mere smoke screen. Along with Atal Behari Vajpayee he takes care of the educated middle-class with moderate and reasonable postures. While the sadhus do the rest. At least, this is the message from the Allahabad meeting.

Overseeing the meeting were Singhal and Onkar Bhawe of the VHP. They did not speak at the public meeting addressed by sadhu leaders nor did Singhal speak at the press conference, though present. But he did not need to. He controls those who control the sadhus who control the masses. How far that control extends only the elections will tell.

One thing is certain though. The coming elections, whenever they are held, will see more sadhu candidates and sadhu campaigners than ever before. There's no dividing line between the politics of religion and the religion of politics. Not anymore. The Congress, the Janata Dal, and even the CPI [Communist Party of India] have stretched out eager hands to embrace the politics of religion. The BJP is not alone in the game. The competition on the hindutva battleground is getting more fierce. With the sadhu the only winner in sight.

Why? Here are a few examples: the prime minister gives legitimacy to the sants by repeatedly inviting them for talks, he sends emissaries to plead his viewpoint with a variety of sadhus, he invites them to join the proposed trust that will build the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and finally he dispatches the Union HRD [Human Resources

Development] minister Arjun Singh to seek the blessings of Satya Sai Baba near Bangalore. So much for the Congress.

Newsmen gathered in Allahabad anxiously awaiting a statement on the VHP's other demands for liberating the Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura and the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi. The only statement that came through was that though the issues were very much on the sadhus' agenda, they will have to wait until the outcome of the Ayodhya dispute. The Sadhus obviously want to keep them in reserve. Like the politicians they watch, to emulate, all strategies must revolve around the need to win elections.

The sammelan debated no questions of theology. It focused on how long the Congress rule would last and how to combat irritants on the political scene like the Janata Dal's Mandal card. Out came a resolution that spoke the voice of V.P. Singh: the dalits, women, and the working class must get social justice. Like politicians making compromises to suit the demands of realpolitik, the sadhus gave up their stubborn faith in the Manu Smriti and his varnashram. Perhaps, for the first time a major conference of sadhus resolved to work for the dalits [a backward caste] and women.

One would ask how many dalits and women attended it. Among the delegates were just two women, Uma Bharti, the Sanyasin MP of BJP and Usha Rani and only one sadhu who openly claimed to hail from the Harijan community. And yet, the backward castes and the Harijans who attended the public meeting after the conference were sufficiently enamored to listen to the campaigners of the caste system speak up for their welfare. The wretched of the earth in the surrounding villages had converged at the Magh Mela to take a dip at the Sangam and wash away the sin of being poor and forgotten. And what bonus did they get?

Like future statesmen, the sadhus debated foreign policy. A resolution declared that Pakistan and Bangladesh be declared as enemy nations. Acharya Dharmendra, the up-and-coming sadhu leader from Rajasthan declared that Muslims will no longer be allowed to sit on Hindu heads, whatever that means. Most of the Muslims here stayed back after the partition because they wanted to enjoy the fruits of our generous spirit. They wanted to become prime ministers, chief ministers, and chief justices, he declared.

Sociologists, beware. You might soon be losing your jobs. The iron grip exercised by the RSS was also evident in the changing worldview of the sadhus attending the conference. Besides being magnanimous to dalits, women, and the working class, some of the top sadhu leaders like Acharya Vamdev, founder of the All India

Sant Samiti, were made to eat their words. Acharya, along with Swami Muktanand, had stunned observers earlier by demanding at the press conference in Delhi that the Constitution be scrapped and replaced by a Hindu-friendly statute.

Acharya even circulated his own draft of the new constitution that sought to do away with minority rights, impose the ban on cow slaughter more stringently, and pave the way for the golden sun of hindutva to shine brilliantly. Three weeks, later, he declared in Allahabad that the present Constitution was good enough provided certain modifications were carried out. The reversal in the stance is mainly aimed at making it possible for the sadhus to contest the elections.

The liberal views expressed through the resolutions passed in the sammelan, which also gave up the vociferous demand to take up the Mathura and Varanasi shrines immediately, was mainly aimed at bringing them in line with the BJP's thinking. The Sangh Parivar has apparently decided that it will brook no differences within it any more. The votaries of a uniform civil code can hardly accept difference within it. The 6 December incident in Ayodhya where the RSS's ability to enforce discipline lay in ruin has awakened the Parivar to the dangers of dissent.

The RSS wants to use the saffron robe; but it also wants to make sure that the sants remain within manageable limits, in line with the BJP's thinking. Certain statements by the sadhus and even BJP functionaries like the UP [Uttar Pradesh] unit general secretary Rajnath Singh and by Sadhvi Rithambara that those who feel apologetic about the demolition, should retire from politics have rung alarm bells. The sadhus have shown that they have the propensity to go haywire. The only way, the RSS feels, to control them is to push them onto the sword-edge of politics. In short, the strategy is: give them responsibility and rein them in.

But the sammelan also revealed two major weaknesses of the hindutva movement. The resolution on dalits showed that the Sangh Parivar seriously doubts its penetration into the weaker sections among the Hindus. Hence, the need to placate them. The indirect rejection of the caste system that it entails indicates that the Parivar has given up hopes of wooing additional recruits from among the nonaligned sadhus into the movement. Those like the Shankaracharya of the Puri and Kashi maths who have openly opposed the RSS ideology of a castless Hindu society are not expected to join.

If things work according to the Parivar's plans, the hands that held the *kamandal* will soon be holding the levers of power. One had better get accustomed to the idea of a Parliament of saffron and tumeric yellow robes. At the very least.

Patent Act Revision Tied to Dunkel Acceptance

93AS0628J Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
15 Feb 93 p 13

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 14 (PTI)—The Indian Patents Act would require a complete revision but stock holding operations or the public distribution system would not be affected by India's acceptance of the Dunkel draft on world trade.

The document prepared by the Commerce Ministry, which will serve as a background paper for discussion between the Commerce Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and different political parties beginning tomorrow, says there is no doubt that the Dunkel text will necessitate a complete revision of the Indian Patents Act, 1970.

On the main concerns relating to the text on trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and its implication on drug prices, the note said it was true that the prices of medicines on patents would be high in comparison to non-patented medicines. But it was difficult to estimate the magnitude of the price rise on account of the patent system, as the prices of medicines, whether patented or non-patented, depended on a variety of factors.

The note said in respect of patented medicines factors included availability of substitutes at cheaper prices, level of technology involved in the manufacture of the patented drug and the nature of disease for which it provided the remedy. It was also to be borne in mind that the effect of patenting on the over-all level of prices of medicines would depend on the proportion of patented and non-patented medicines in the Indian market.

At present this proportion is estimated to be around ten per cent taking the market as a whole, the ministry said.

According to it, negotiations were in progress on the issue of the local working of the patent. India's effort is to see that when it was feasible to work a patent commercially here and it was not so worked to ensure that the opportunity for compulsory licensing was available.

Referring to the Dunkel draft on agriculture, ministry said, the obligation envisaged in the proposals did not encompass subsidies to consumers. It was of the view that if certain conditions were laid down in the text in respect of holding of buffer stocks and domestic food aid, it was only to ensure that individual countries do not give additional subsidies to producers in the garb of subsidies to consumers.

During the negotiations in December 1992, the major participants confirmed that the stock-holding operations through the Food Corporation of India or our public distribution system would not be affected in any way if the Dunkel draft were to be accepted, the paper said. The ministry note said for countries like India, which have quantitative restrictions for balance of payment reasons, there was no requirement of converting the restrictions

into tariffs or to give minimum access commitments as long as such restrictions continued.

India has offered to bind its tariff on primary agricultural products at 100 per cent, on processed products at 150 per cent and on edible oils at 300 per cent.

The Dunkel proposals envisage that as a first step for reduction of domestic subsidy, calculations have to be made by each Government as the aggregate measure of support (AMS). The AMS is to be calculated separately for subsidies which were product specific and subsidies which were non-product specific. Calculations made by the Commerce Ministry show that the non-product specific AMS works out to about five per cent even if exemptions are not taken into account.

On textiles, the Commerce Ministry note said the agreement was not evenly balanced in the sense that in the initial years of the ten year period of phasing out of the multifibre arrangement, there was minimum liberalisation. In fact significant steps for liberalisation were left to the last three years. This is one of the points of dissatisfaction for India and we are strongly urging the importing countries to bring forward the liberalisation process, the note said.

Referring to services, the note said the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) does not by itself impose the obligation of providing access across the board to foreign service providers. This has to be negotiated by individual countries.

Farmers of India Agitated, United Against Dunkel

93AS0628K Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
4 Mar 93 p 9

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—The campaign against the agricultural implications of the Dunkel proposals reached a new high on Wednesday when thousands of farmers from different parts of the country collected in the Capital, demanding total rejection of the Dunkel Draft.

The grounds behind Red Fort, venue of the farmers' rally, was packed to capacity for most part of the day and conservative estimates put the strength around 40,000. Farmers sat patiently, all ears to what their leaders had to say about the 'threat' from Dunkel.

They had trooped in with a vague idea of the Dunkel danger, aware that there was some sort of a 'threat' from across the seas. The full import of the interests Dunkel represents sank in gradually and farmers began applauding and shaking fists everytime their leaders threatened to expel the multinational giants from the country.

The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) and the Karnataka Rajya Ryota Sangh (KRRS)—airing the farmers' opposition to the Dunkel demand for foreign patenting of plant varieties and genes—later demanded ratification

of all international agreements by Parliament and State Legislatures. For this the Constitution should be amended accordingly, they demanded.

BKU president Mahendra Singh Tikait and Prof M.D. Nanjundaswamy, chief of the KRRS, held meetings with farmer leaders from different parts of the country while others kept alive the proceedings, the speeches punctuated with elegies and warlike sounds of the copper bugle 'Ransingha'.

Citybred anti-Dunkel activists rubbed shoulders with farmers, distributing pamphlets and holding aloft banners of different shades and kinds. Farmers swirled green shawls in the air everytime a farmer leader made an appearance on the dais and up went banners like 'Gene Campaign Ka Yeh Sandesh/Hamara Beej Hamara Desh' (This is the Gene Campaign message/Our country, Our seeds) and 'Let us banish multinational corporations from the country.'

No political colour: Although devoid of political colour and speech, the rally turned out to be a critical appraisal of Government functioning. Tikait warned Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to "mend his ways" otherwise "the rural populace, which is 80 percent of the total population, will remove him the way they know best." He urged the Kisan Panchayat, likely to meet on Thursday, to "give Rao minimum time to think over his actions and decide."

Declaring debts of farmers as "artificial creations of various development strategies," Tikait and other leaders announced that "farmers of India are not debtors and they owe nothing to any financial institution." Farmers were told not to pay back any of "these so-called debts" and to oppose the import of all agricultural and dairy produce "which has the sole objective of pegging down domestic prices."

Another important demand was for scientifically calculated parity prices for agricultural produce according to the price index taking 1967 as the base year. The meeting of farmers, while deciding that no agricultural land should be made available to multinational corporations, also opposed the acquisition of agricultural land for any non-agricultural purpose.

At the end of the day, leaders were confident that the farmers' message had gone out. Although the organisers had decided on a two-day rally, many farmers from western Uttar Pradesh were seen heading for home in the evening. Farmers from Karnataka, present here in sizeable numbers, continued to arrive even after Day One of the rally. It is likely that the Kisan Panchayat will hold a meeting here on Thursday. Also on the anvil is a farmers' meeting with the Prime Minister, details of which are being worked out.

Survey Shows Economy Held Hostage by Communalism

93AS0628L Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Feb 93 p 8

[Text] There is little critical self-evaluation when the Economic Survey for 1992-93 expresses the overall view that the policy initiatives since June 1991 have begun to show results. A growth rate of 4 percent in 1992-93 is no evidence of recovery since it is an upturn in agriculture, occasioned by a good monsoon, rather than a revival in industry (which is where most of the reform process has taken place) that has resulted in a relatively satisfactory performance. The success in controlling and bringing down inflation is more apparent than real for, this has not been brought about by reducing inessential government expenditure but by squeezing revenue and capital expenditure in the social sectors. If expenditure on social services is going to be raised, as the Survey says is to happen, then the true test will be in the Government's ability to finally attack inessential expenditure. The success in efforts at macro-economic stabilisation, as measured by the reduction in the budgetary deficit, is also questionable. As the Survey itself points out, while the deficit at the end of the financial year has been lowered (by a combination of a surge in revenues and postponement of expenditure) the average level of the deficit during the course of the year remains high. This phenomenon has not helped reduce monetary growth, which makes difficult a lowering of inflation to the targeted 5 to 6 percent. An acceleration in the growth of exports to the general currency areas until last November is one genuinely bright spot in the performance of the economy. But it remains far below the Government's projections and what is required to neutralise the precipitous fall in exports to the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Government has plans to borrow an additional \$2.5 to 3 billion every year over the next three years, a requirement based on an annual export growth of 13 to 15 percent. That means that unless the overall export growth of 4 percent between last April and November is tripled, either external borrowings in the years ahead will have to be even larger or import liberalisation will have to be halted.

An ambitious agenda for reform of the financial sector and tax structure has been set. But the ability to carry out such reform will depend crucially on the absence of communal violence on the scale witnessed in December and January. The Survey presents the startling statistic that because of the riots exports in December declined by as much as 12.5 percent and states that the losses because of the Bombay riots have also been substantial. The hesitant recovery in industrial production towards the end of last year will also have been set back by the violence. It is not just reform but the economy as a whole that is being held hostage by communalism. Finally, unlike in last year's Survey or in the 1992-93 Union budget there is a recognition that neither poverty alleviation nor human resource development can be ignored.

But it is only the budget for 1993-94 that will tell us if this concern is going to be translated into larger financial outlays.

ADB's Loan Emphasis Shifts to Infrastructure

93AS0628M Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Feb 93 p 13

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 23 (PTI)—The Asian Development Bank (ADB) proposes to shift the emphasis of its lending in the 1990s programme from industry and infrastructure to poverty alleviation, social infrastructure, environment and women.

The bank's programme for the period 1994 to 1996 was the subject matter of discussion with a bank country programming mission, which was in India from January 17 to 29, and has tentatively been agreed upon, according to Mr. Richard O. Wada, Chief of the India resident office of ADB.

The bank's level of lending, which was nearly \$1 billion in 1992, is expected to exceed \$1.0 billion in 1993, Mr. Wada told newsmen here recently. Although the bank will continue to lay emphasis on industrialisation, there will be increasing stress in its lending programme on social and equity concerns, he said. In the industrial sector, the bank hoped to provide some assistance to help alleviate labour dislocation problems associated with industrial restructuring and was examining the possibility of support through the national renewal fund.

One segment of the industrial sector the bank was looking at in this regard was textiles, where the labour was reciprocating management initiative, Mr. Wada said. Another sector was the engineering sector. The real need in the national renewal programme was the building up of institutional support for administering it, he said.

The bank was also exploring the possibilities of involvement in urban development projects, including low income housing.

Azad Criticized for Accommodating Striking Pilots

93AS0628H Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
5 Mar 93 p 8

[Text] The management of Indian Airlines has virtually surrendered to the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association [ICPA]. It has conceded the extravagant demands of the pilots obviously at the behest of the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad. The management, in fact, had earlier taken the sensible stand that the pilots must fly more to earn more and that the kind of hike in allowances they had been clamouring for was beyond the capacity of the airline. This precisely has been the stand taken by the managements of other airlines, much better off than the Indian Airlines. The employees, too, have endorsed it. The agreement and the manner in which it has been worked out are reminiscent

of the old days of ministerial management of public enterprises with the managers dutifully putting the seal of formal approval.

The pilots have managed to get an increase of 50 percent in food allowance from January 1, 1991, to December 30, 1992, and a full hundred percent thereafter till December 31, 1995. For their part, the pilots have not conceded anything except a vague undertaking "to mutually review the working hours and utilisation of pilots to complete all the requirements of the airline and optimum utilisation of all the aircraft." Whether this assurance will be translated into action is doubtful, judging by past experience. That the pilots have not yet considered to be unsafe is a telling example as much of their cynical unconcern for the travelling public as of ministerial and managerial ineffectiveness to get something in return for all the generous concessions.

It is true that the Sivaraman Committee was seized of the issue of safety in some airports. But the Committee, which submitted its findings to the government a week ago, has reportedly cleared all these airports although it has suggested improvements in ground support facilities in some of them. Relevantly, the Ministry should have at least insisted on immediate resumption of services to these airports, most of which, incidentally, have been raking in profits for the airline. Already, the largesse granted to the pilots has whetted the appetite for other sections of the airline employees which are no less crucial in keeping aircraft flying. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad owes it to Parliament and the public to explain two important issues. First, why did he make the management surrender without matching concessions by the pilots, and, second, how does he propose to enforce discipline in the airline now that he has emasculated the management? Mr. Azad clearly does not realise that by pampering the pilots, he may have sown the seeds of more serious industrial strife in Indian Airlines. How, for instance, will he head off a possible agitation by other sections of the employees for an equally steep rise in their emoluments?

Budget Seen Inadequate, Full of Oversights

93AS0667A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 10 Mar 93
p 4

[Article by Laxmi Chand Jain: "The System is Haphazard"]

[Text] It appears that the government has decided not to learn from past mistakes. This time around it talked about increasing the budget in the area of social programs. However, nothing is said about reorganizing the system. All the studies that have evaluated the government plans have concluded that, even though money is spent liberally by the government, there is little or no respect for the rupee. Nothing is done to measure the success of the projects on which the money is spent. Now, in this budget, Pandit Manmohan Singh has tried

to explain to the Parliament the importance of elementary education, especially for girls, in order to modernize our economy and social system. "Therefore," said he, "I am so glad to announce that the budget for education has been increased from 9.52 billion rupees to 13.10 billion rupees."

Eight years ago, Rajiv Gandhi's government presented a report to the Parliament with the title of "Challenge of Education." This report explicitly said that two-thirds of the teachers in the elementary schools did not teach at all. They just picked up their pay checks. The girls cannot be admitted to those schools because they do not even have separate bathrooms for them. It was said at that time that, unless revolutionary changes were made in the school system, the teachers would just keep picking up their pay checks and the students would not learn anything. During the last 10 years, the federal and state governments have spent about 500 billion rupees on elementary education. If the villagers ask the teachers why they do not teach, the teachers insultingly tell them that they are not their employees and are paid by the government and education department.

Rajiv Gandhi did explain to the Parliament the details of the challenge of providing education. However, he did not take any step to rectify the painful problem. For the last 2 1/2 years, Narasimha Rao and the finance minister have been trying to clean up the economic system, and have taken many important steps to free major industries from government restrictions. They have praised their government about it and have said that all the obstructions that were in the path of local and foreign investors have been removed, and they have made major improvements in our country's economic system in such a short time.

However, if they really believe that the foundation of modernization should be laid through elementary education, do they expect to achieve their goals by just spending the money without making major changes in the education system? It is beyond our understanding that, while major overhaul was done in the major industries system, nothing is being done to revitalize such important foundations of social restructure as elementary education and basic health care. They have not given even one percent attention to it. In this situation, learning about the increase of 3.5 billion rupees in education and 1.8 billion rupees in the area of basic health care hurts us instead of making us happy. Why is the finance ministry, which is facing money crisis and is sending its people to beg in foreign nations, not sensitive to money being wasted? For it, we must totally overhaul the system.

As for the social viewpoint of this government, we must discuss two aspects here. Of the 35 billion rupees increased for education, about 10 billion rupees will be spent on "renaissance" schools. These schools will be at district level and not at village level, and aim to fulfill Rajiv's dream of having a Doon School in every district

as a model. He had gone through the grandiose educational challenge report and come up with the petty idea of Doon Schools for the nation. These are expensive schools. Each building costs 100 million rupees. The students who finish their first five grades in the village schools would be admitted to these schools. How many children would qualify admission to the "renaissance" schools after having substandard education in the village schools? In addition, how many students can be accommodated at the district level when every district has about 2,500 villages? The only benefit from it was for the "renaissance" schools that received several times more money per student. Meanwhile, the schools in the villages have no drinking water, no bathroom, and no teachers.

Thus, we are not only wasting money now, but the minister has totally ignored his own goal of providing elementary education to girls by ignoring the importance of structural changes in our education system. Karnataka has presented a good example to the nation. When panchayats [village councils] were established in November 1987, the responsibility of primary education and health care was also given to the elected representatives. As the result of this approach, teachers and health department employees began to work hard the very first month. This example showed that without spending any new money and without any new solution we can affect revolutionary changes in our primary education system. During the last ten years, 100 billion rupees were spent on primary and another 250 billion rupees on basic health care. Cannot the control of these spendings be given to the local administrative units? Cannot this successful example be implemented in the whole nation? This has not been mentioned in this budget or the budgets that preceded this one or in the speeches made. In the speeches of our prime minister and the finance minister, they have been touting the new policies for the last 2 1/2 years, they have not said that employment is as important as education and health care in social development plans.

It is unfortunate that our finance minister had to announce in his speech that he has proved all those people wrong who claimed that the new policies would make hundreds of thousands of people lose jobs. These words do not come out well from his lips because he did not tell us how many new jobs were created during the period he claims his economic policies to have been successful. One government research report revealed that as the result of structural changes in the clothing industry, which will be implemented in other industries as per the government policy, over 900 thousand handlooms have become idle, reducing the production and incomes of hundreds of thousands of weavers to half. Many weavers in Andhra Pradesh (whose names, addresses, and ages were published by many newspapers and reports about them were presented in the Parliament) have committed suicide or died of starvation. The finance minister and his government mocked those families by offering each family 5,000 rupees. A week

before the budget was presented, the prime minister met with a group of 10,000 weavers and learned about their declining occupation. He had assured them that his government was going to take some concrete steps to ensure their income would not decline. Only seven days later, the finance minister presented the budget, and did not even mention the plight of these weavers when he talked about the textiles industry. He did not say anything about alleviating their situation. Instead, he increased their problems by announcing the assistance given to the man-made materials. Major industrialists like Ambani make problems for them. Unfortunately, they have access not only to the industries but also to the industries ministry.

The finance minister has assured us in his last budget also that our industries would change so dramatically because of his policies that employment opportunities would increase in every area. When he announced today that industrial output has increased by four percent, he should have also told us how many new job opportunities were created. Recently, when John Major, the prime minister of a prosperous nation, returned home after visiting India, he was asked how he had time to visit India when there were so many problems like unemployment in England. He said that he had brought 20,000 jobs from India to England. In other words, he was successful in increasing exports from his country, and this would create additional jobs there. President Clinton is promising daily that his economic reforms will create 500,000 jobs. However, our cabinet just does not mention employment, and they never show in those statistics how many jobs will be created. All they want is to have the unemployed dig dirt under the Jawahar Employment Plan. In a report published in this newspaper, it was said that 100 billion rupees were wasted on Jawahar Employment Plan and the people did not get work for more than 16 days in the year. More money was thrown in the holes that were dug than the number of holes! Manmohan Singh has said about this budget that he has increased spendings for poverty removal programs such as the Jawahar Employment Plan. Only the people who have benefitted from the 100 billion rupees in the past will be happy to hear about this increase. We cannot see any plan for wiping the tears of the unemployed even with a microscope.

Budget Seen Manipulative, Inaccurate

93AS0667B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 12 Mar 93
p 6

[Article by Ray Singh: "This Budget is Just a Manipulation of Figures"]

[Text] The BBC gave more than one minute in its world news service program to the pre-budget activities of Manmohan Singh on 26 February. However, on 27 February, the BBC gave only 15-20 seconds to cover the budget presentation in the Parliament. The BBC action show that the finance minister's budget did not only obey the orders given by the IMF and the World Bank,

but also had accepted Prime Minister John Major's suggestions by reducing import duties. Similar suggestions were made by Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor in his visit.

In the 1993-94 budget, he has tried to silence all walks of people by putting lollipops in their mouths, by reducing local taxes; freeing about one million industries from required registration; reducing import and production duties; and reducing excise on refrigerators, televisions, electric fans, toothpastes, face powders and creams, vegetable oils, and cookies. Manmohan Singh has tried to make as many voters happy as possible by increasing spending on agriculture and education and increasing subsidies for agriculture-related production. All this indicates that he fears possible mid-term elections. Manmohan Singh is whistling in the dark to let his associates and the people know that everyone will get something under his financial leadership. These donations and charities will continue as long as the voters continue to vote for his party. Money is very important for winning elections, even mid-term elections. At this time, the number of election voters has increased and the price of votes changes like the exchange rates for rubles every other day. It would not be exaggerating if we called the 1993-94 budget the election budget. In Addition, there are talks about holding elections in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan in June-July. Therefore, it is important to keep the voters in mind when presenting the budget!

Increases and decreases in taxes and prices are included in budgets of every country. In this Indian budget, the most important announcement is that the rupee will be fully convertible. The finance minister surprised us when he announced that the rupee would be fully convertible in his 95-minute long speech on the budget. Talks about making the rupee fully convertible took place at various government levels last year. Discussions were carried out on the All India Radio, and several talks were conducted with cabinet ministers and government officials taking part in them. The main reason for the surprise over the finance minister's announcement was the assumption of the experts that the rupee would not suddenly be made fully convertible. This change was to take place gradually and according to an organized plan while observing the foreign currency reserve and the rate of foreign trade increase, especially the rate of export. At various meetings the government had given assurances about the gradual change. Manmohan Singh's sudden announcement clearly indicates that the pressure from foreign leaders and the World Bank had increased to a point that the finance minister had to make this unilateral announcement. Making the announcement about the rupee's convertibility is easy; however, dealing with the resulting problems will be very difficult. The finance minister has tried to assure us in his speech, as did finance secretary Gita Krishnan and secretary for financial affairs, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, that this is the right time to make the rupee fully convertible because India has amassed 280 billion rupees in foreign exchange.

They also claimed that this will help increase our exports. If we analyze these claims with a fine tooth comb, we will learn that both of these claims are wrong.

The first claim is about the availability of foreign exchange worth 280 billion rupees. Having such a huge amount of foreign exchange is a welcome development, however, if we analyze this stockpile, we will learn that 85 percent of this money was received through loans. Another 10 percent was received through the deposits made into Indian banks by Indian nationals living abroad. The remaining five percent is not enough even for paying interest on foreign loans. During the last three years, about 50 billion rupees in foreign exchange were needed to pay the interest on foreign loans. The amount paid in interest has increased now because the recent agreement between Russia and India calls for payment of interest on loans received for defense provisions must be paid in dollars instead of in rupees or rubles. In addition, India will have to import more oil because of the decreased production by Indian oil wells, especially in the Bombay High region, because of neglect of drilling machinery, ineffective administration, and corrupt officials. According to one estimate, India will have to spend between 1.7-2 billion rupees more in 1992-93 in spite of the \$4 or \$5 per barrel decrease in the price of oil. The same estimate calls for an additional 3-3.5 billion rupees for purchasing oil in 1993-94. It is clear that the 280 billion rupees exchange reserve is not enough even to meet our nation's needs. The rains have been very good during the last three years and there has been no drought in our country. Still, billions in foreign exchange will be needed to import food grains such as wheat. This is not possible with the limited 280 billion rupees in foreign exchange. Any sagacious finance minister would make announcements carefully after reviewing all these possibilities.

The finance minister and his assistants have also claimed that this step will help increase our exports. This claim is questionable also. The old policy required payment of 40 percent of the amount received from exports to the Reserve Bank of India. This 40 percent helped the government pay for importing oil, petroleum products, fertilizers, drugs, and defense machinery. This year, 1992-93, this 40 percent foreign exchange proved to be too little to import these items. The Indian government ordered the Indian Oil Corporation to obtain foreign exchange in the open market to pay for the oil imported. In addition to the difficulties faced in obtaining foreign exchange in the open market, we ended up paying higher interest rates. Import of oil is expected to increase in 1993-94 because of the decreasing oil production in our

country. This means that the foreign exchange reserve will not be enough during the 1993-94 year because of the increased import of oil. This heavy demand on the foreign exchange reserve will endanger full convertibility of the rupee, and might result in rupee devaluation. In order to make the rupee fully convertible, the Reserve Bank of India must have enough foreign exchange available at all times. In order to maintain the exchange rate and status of the rupee in the open market, the Reserve Bank of India must have the ability to provide foreign exchange.

This system is called an open market operation. The highest national bank of the country tries to maintain stability in the open market to keep the exchange rate and the prestige of the currency steady. What will the Reserve Bank of India do when it has no foreign exchange in its coffers? Finance Minister Manmohan Singh and his assistants have claimed that our export will increase by 15 or 16 percent in dollar currency next year. It would be great if it really happens. The fact is that the world markets are facing recession now, and it would be great if we maintain the level of our last year's exports. In spite of such claims by the finance ministry during the last three years, we could not attain even a 10 percent increase in our exports. Talk about 16 percent is out of the question. We would consider it a miracle if India succeeds in increasing its exports by 3-5 percent in the recessed world market.

The finance minister did not say anything in his 95-minute speech about how to resolve the problems created by the recession in markets around the world. Finance Minister Manmohan Singh is a well-known economist. Before becoming the finance minister, he worked on formulating economic policies as finance secretary. He also was the vice chairman of the Planning Commission and the governor of the Reserve Bank of India. He was a high official in the IMF in Washington and at the World Bank. An experienced and knowledgeable person cannot make such mistakes. This is not a mistake; just a policy.

At this time when there is little possibility of increasing exports and import of necessary items is expected to increase, why did we encourage imports by reducing the 2.25 billion rupees earned in import duties? We can tout the liberal economic policy and can announce the convertibility of the rupee, however, we can also sabotage these efforts by reducing the import duty. Last year, Russia tried to make the ruble convertible in the name of liberalization. We have seen the results. Gaidar was dismissed by his friend and supporter, President Yeltsin himself. The seven rubles that could buy a dollar 4-5 years ago cannot buy even one cent!

Top Army Officers Stress Need to Modernize
93AS0630C Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
16 Feb 93 p 9

[Article by Pravin Sawhney]

[Text] New Delhi—If meaningful modernisation of the army is not taken-up on a war-footing, there are reasons to believe that the 1.1 million force with antiquated weapons, over time, may remain just about fit for internal security duties, is a shocking in-house assessment recently made by an army top brass team.

And reasons for this gloomy picture are evident. Years of frozen defence budget has stymied perspective planning, scuttled wholesome modernisation and created enormous deficiencies with little prospects of a roll-back. To add to the grim hope is the widening row between the services and bureaucracy, fudged financial allocations in the published defence budget and a non-committal political direction. "While the world debates the growing Indian prowess of missiles and regional out-of-area capabilities, the services itself are most unsure," observed a senior officer.

Equipment shortage: Consider the facts regarding growing deficiencies in the army. Working on a 80 percent combat availability, there is shortage of over 18,000 crore worth of equipment. This is more than the entire 1992-93 defence budget of Rs 17,500 crores. There is a crucial shortage in certain specialised categories of ammunition, like armour-piercing-fin-stabilising-discarding-s-abot, 155 mm calibre projectiles, extended range mortar ammunition and special small arms calibre munitions. In these categories, the army may not be able to sustain an intense war beyond 3.5 days. There is also a grave short-fall in certain types of mines.

The vehicles needed for war mobilisation have shortages worth over 26,000 numbers. Because of no vehicle policy, the state controlled director general ordnance factories (DGOF) produces 8,000 vehicles each year, of which 4,000 manufactured Shaktiman vehicles have long been declared useless by the service. There are "works" deficiencies estimated at over Rs 9,000 crore, with an annual allocation of only Rs 400 crore provided in the budget. "Works" include both troops and equipment accommodation. The latter is critical as given the lack of authorised equipment sheds and a traditional army distaste for maintenance, the wear and tear on sophisticated and expensive armament is enormous.

The daily maintenance of 35 divisions (each having about 13,000 troops) and numerous static formations equipment and all those spares which cost either more than Rs 2 lakh or have a life more than seven years, are required to be catered by the "maintenance budget." This also includes the daily nearly Rs 3 crore spent on the Siachen operations.

And the 1992-93 army maintenance budget was Rs 3,188.89 crore, of which Rs 1,600 crore were given to the DGOF, which is capacity based and not product based state owned organisation. This implies that while the army for the same money gets less equipment each year (because of inflation and depleting forex), the DGOF has been maintaining its ever increasing idle capacity and over-staffed manpower.

Modernisation, for which Rs 1,219.61 were allocated in 1992-93, consists of upgradation and weapon acquisitions. Also included in this money are the contractual obligations of previously purchased imported equipment in forex, usually accounting for about 30 percent of the mentioned capital outlay.

Little upgradation: In so far as upgradations are concerned, little has been done in the last four years for lack of finances. Conversion of Vijayanta tank formations to the T-72 tank are way behind schedule, resulting in, at least, 14 holding formations operating with defect prone Vijayantas, which itself are wearing-off by the day. While the Avadi T-72 tank factory has a capacity to manufacture 400 tanks every year, the army does not have finances to purchase more than 40 tanks annually. There are no thermal imagers (required to operate at night and under inclement weather) for the tanks and most fire control systems of the 1,400 T-54/55 tanks require urgent upgradations.

The air defence guns are archaic. L/70 AD guns require immediate replacements. There is an urgent need for 300 indigenously manufactured flycatcher radars, each costing RS 7 crore. And the army cannot pay for more than 6 radars every year. Russian Tanguskhas costing Rs 7 crore each have been sought as replacements for the antiquated Shilka anti-aircraft guns. These, and certain critical air defence missiles need replacement for lack of funds. There is also a dire need for medium range battle field surveillance radars to optimally utilise Prithvi battlefield support missiles.

The cost of each Prithvi missile is Rs1.7 crore and the third generation fire and forget anti-tank missile Nag will cost 60 lakh each. With each corps scheduled to have a four missile launcher unit, the moot question is how many missiles can the army afford.

Even before Prithvi is inducted into the service, there is a requirement for an integrated battle-field command, control, communication and intelligence systems to optimally utilise the Prithvi-150 version scheduled for the army and 250 version for the air force. Also needed are target acquisition means, real time communications link-up and damage assessment means, which army does not have.

Perspective planning, both short and long term, has remained defunct. The seventh and eighth defence plan which were prepared and got the government clearance, have remained still-born for want of finances. While former army chief Gen Sundarji's defence perspective plan-2000 AD was far-fetched and divorced both from

the sub-continental ground realities and financial constraints, legitimate requirements to even match the western adversary have been denied since the freezing of the budget at Rs 13,000 crore in 1989-90. A worthwhile army aviation corps, self-propelled guns, artillery divisions, air defence command, more mechanisation and its support infrastructure (Pakistan has built all these assets) and a dedicated defence satellite are some issues requiring urgent attention, if the army is to fight a modern day war, according to the army assessment.

Govt should act: Each year since 1989, the government has frozen the budget, and has resorted to supplementary demand to cater even for the sheer pay and allowances for the troops.

The answer, therefore, does not lie so much in tightening in-house belt, which was accomplished by October 1992, with the implementation of the major recommendations of the Narasimham committee report instituted to streamline the army structural imbalances. The answer rests with the government. Either cut down the present strength of 35 divisions by nearly 10 divisions, with the military direction derived from the political proviso that the Chinese threat has reduced. Or increase the budget. What needs to be remembered is that "peace time preparedness is war time capability," as suggested in the assessment.

Documentary Film on IAF Said Full of Insight

93AS0630A *Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English*
14 Feb 93 p 10

[Article by Gavin Nazareth and Neetinder Dhillon; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The canopy closes with a soft click. The softness belying the finality of the act. Ensnared in the cockpit of the MIG-27 jet fighter cut off from reality, sits a man staring intently through the perspex, his brow furrowed with concentration as if trying to memorize the scene before him. Yet, unable to take in the moonlit spectacle of the airfield, he shoots a glance at the instrument panel glowing ominously in the dark and his hand darts from switch to switch, each action bringing the sleeping animal to life. He toys with it—as if gentling a wild stallion revelling in the deep-throated throb of the engine—waiting for a signal. A cackle of static shatters the deafening silence and a disembodied voice gives him the go ahead he seeks. His gloved hand reaches for the throttle ... and then it's just the man and his machine in a world where no one can intrude—except for that disembodied voice. He flexes his shoulders as he reflects on the enormity of his actions, alone in the inky blackness of space. The final bonds, which for centuries have made man earthbound, broken as he relaxes, well in control of his fighter jet.

Shorn of the glamour attributed to him by the motion pictures, this flyboy is but a lonely man, putting his life on the line every time he soars into the sky, on the never-ending sorties. Heavy on his shoulders is the trust

of his Squadron Commander, who believes in his ability to control and guide the fighter as it should be, depending on him to accomplish the mission.

And these men in blue are trained to leave their emotions behind when they leave the ground, trained to accomplish the mission, whatever the cost. This is what Kunal and Deepti Verma, the husband-wife team, have tried to portray in their yet untitled film on the history of Indian Air Force [IAF]. To say that it is a documentary on India's flying defence would be too trite, for it is much more.

Talking about the inspiration behind this project, Kunal says: "It was the desire to portray the armed forces as they really are and not the caricaturised versions of the Hindi films. The original idea was to make a 15-episode serial, of one hour capsules on the armed forces as a whole. This was in 1989, when General Sethna got involved in it. The response was very good, the Naval Chief of Staff, Admiral Nadkarni, General Rodrigues (then an army commander) and Air Marshall Suri, the vice chief, were all for it. But somewhere along the line, the whole focus changed. Air Chief Marshall Suri, took over as the chief of air staff and asked us to make a film on the Air Force as 1992 was their golden jubilee year."

That they had to jettison the work already put in is another story.

Then began the odyssey of trying to cram the 50-odd years of the Air Force into a one hour film. "The IAF was very forthcoming. Right in the beginning they made it clear that except for financing the project they were willing to extend all other help," reveals Kunal. After getting the script approved by the Air HQ, began the hunt for the elusive sponsors. "Finally I decided to contact JRD Tata. I was sure he wouldn't refuse and he didn't. We wanted to make a film which would make this country feel good about the Air Force. JRD wanted that too and agreed to sponsor the film."

Then work began in earnest. The 21-lakh one-hour film, with cosmonaut Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma as commentator, opens with a World War II Wapiti fighter framed against the setting sun. And then unfolds the glorious saga of India's Air Force starting from the 1930s, when the first Indian cadets left to train in Cranwell at the Royal Training College, to the present day sophistication of the MIG 27. The film also incorporates actual rare footage of the Royal Air Force interspersed with enactments of scenes not available.

Though the film will be of great archival importance, the sensitive handling of the subject makes it a far cry from the boring documentaries Doordarshan generally dishes out. The film has rare footage of the Burma Campaign and shots of the then Squadron Leaders Arjun Singh and Meher Singh (or Baba Meher Singh as he was affectionately known—the man who is said to have won Kashmir for us in 1947). Certain interesting landmarks like the airlift of Sikh Regiment I to Kashmir on 26 October 1947, the Battle of Poonch and the Battle of Longewal,

have been re-enacted with present day shots juxtaposed with actual footage of the war.

The film doesn't stop here, it tries to educate the viewer about the role the IAF plays during peace-time as well, i.e., aiding the civil authorities during times of natural calamities like floods and earthquakes, the protection of oil rigs, its state of readiness, etc. The mammoth capacity of the IAF to airlift and maintain the troops was amply exhibited during the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] operations in Sri Lanka. The husband-wife duo are trying to educate through their film. The admirable part is that it doesn't restrict itself just to the IAF or show it in isolation. Despite the fact that the film is about the IAF, the role of the Army or the Navy has not been minimised, as is the case with most films of this nature, where the role of one service is highlighted to the exclusion of all others. Another point in its favour is that the human element hasn't been relegated to the background, it is ever present.

"There were a lot of problems," says Deepti. "Especially when we had to recreate the scenes prior to Independence. Beginning with the uniforms, getting hold of RAF badges, was very difficult. We tried getting one from Britain but they cost the earth, so we got them made by a zariwalla. This was minor compared to the logistics involved in moving men and machines all over the country, 33 locations to be exact, including remote snowbound Siachen." Deepti is the first woman to fly in a Jaguar. And she has a certificate to prove it.

It took 60-odd days and a 22-member team that included three women, shooting at 33 locations like Pune, Bareilly, Ambala, Agra, Gwalior, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Coimbatore, Siachen, Leh, etc. And air force pilots flew 200 sorties in MIA-26s, MiG-25s Jaguars, IL-76s, Mirage 2000s and MiG-29s.

What was filmed not only came as a shock to the IAF, but the duo themselves were astounded at what they had captured on celluloid. "The air force went all out to help us," says a thankful Kunal. "Even the army and the navy gave us all the help we needed. There was no question of non-cooperation. We had decided not to use actors, because however good the actor he can never imitate the loose-limbed swagger of a pilot or for that matter be at ease with a gun in his hand. Actors look artificial, trigger happy to say the least, and too earnest. So we decided to use the Air Force and the Army men. They did find it a little difficult learning their lines and emoting before the cameras, but were game. No one complained. They could have told us to 'take a walk' when we demanded retake after retake, but they went along."

Kunal flew 33 sorties himself. "Whatever we asked for was given except when we wanted to film the Gnats," recounts Kunal. "That was the only time the Air Force refused outright." They had reason to, for the said plane had been mothballed earlier and the Air Force refused to take the risk of flying them. "Though they did agree to taxi them for our benefit. And while shooting this sequence the brakes of one of the Gnats failed and it veered off the runway, but no one was hurt," adds Deepti, a product of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. Kunal has done stint with INDIA TODAY.

So pleased were the Air HQ with the rushes that they are now willing to talk about filming aspects of training, exercises, etc., which were earlier denied to them.

And while India watches this tribute on the small screen, somewhere in this vast country of ours, in some non-descript airfield, a pilot will be coming in for touch-down, taxiing along the tarmac home, but still a stranger to the ground.

Technology Policy Draft Viewed, Implementation Urged*93AS0630D Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 23 Feb 93 p 8*

[Text] The draft paper on a new technology policy released by the Central Government on Saturday aims at strengthening the objectives of the 1983 science and technology policy statement but, in the light of the experience gained in the last 10 years, lays more emphasis on implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy and specific steps taken for promotion of technological excellence in the country. The last decade was one of retardation of development, compared to earlier periods, for indigenous science and technology, though the need to harness them in the economic development efforts has been more pressing than ever. The result is an increasing gap between the country's scientific and technological progress and that of other developing countries. Generation of funds for research and development has been the main problem in the field of technological progress. The Government had recently announced that it would meet only half the budgetary requirements of the laboratories under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR]. The new policy proposes to generate funds from industry based on its annual turnover and has hinted at an increased R&D cess for all industries except the small-scale units. The overall target of R&D investment, set by the draft document, at 2 percent of the Gross National Product [GNP] is ambitious considering that the current figure is 0.9 percent. Other elements of the policy like decentralisation of science and technology systems and improved linkages between research institutions and users are essential requirements in a complex, fast-changing and difficult scientific and economic milieu. The draft document is open for debate and the sooner a national consensus evolves on the technology policy and the Government comes out with executive and legislative measures for its implementation, the better for the country's economic growth.

Rao Says Space Technology for Development Only*93AS0630B Secunderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE in English 15 Feb 93 p 9*

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 14 (UNI)—The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao on Sunday declared India was committed to the harnessing of space technology solely for accelerating the pace of development in the country.

Addressing the parliamentary consultative committee attached to the science and technology ministry and other science departments, Mr. Rao stressed the importance of moving towards greater self-reliance in critical technological areas to provide support for socio-economic development programmes.

Congratulating Indian space scientists for demonstrating their ability to design, develop and build state-of-the-art space programmes to meet diverse development needs,

Mr. Rao said the nation looked forward to the launch of the Insat-II B and the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) later this year.

He said the thrust of science and technology programmes should be based on the need for promotional research in emerging areas and marrying this with the country's developmental requirements.

The Prime Minister said the government would be willing to provide more funds for research and application of biotechnology for furthering agricultural development.

The committee saw a presentation on recent developments in space programmes in the country.

Space Projects Will Be Pursued for Self-Reliance*93AS0630F Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 2 Mar 93 p 7*

[Text] New Delhi, March 1 (PTI)—India would continue to pursue its space programme to establish a self-reliant base in space sciences and technology despite the restrictions placed by the United States and other members of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), External Affairs Minister Dinesh Singh told the Lok Sabha during question hour.

He said the United States and others recently announced revised guidelines extending the scope of restrictions from "missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons" to "missiles capable of carrying any weapon of mass destruction," thus lowering the thresholds established earlier. Specific thresholds however, have not been announced under the revised guidelines.

Earlier in May 1992, the United States imposed an embargo on Indian Space Research Organisation for a period of two years in respect of components and systems for space programmes. Despite these restraints, India would go ahead with its space programme, he said.

Pragmatism, Judiciousness Urged in Land Use Review*93AS0628A Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English 24 Feb 93 p 8*

[Text] The State Government's move to frame guidelines for giving exemption from the Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) Act by increasing the developmental charges, is apparently prompted by the failure of the ULC Act to yield the desired results. The legislation enacted by the Centre in the Seventies has not achieved tangible results. In Karnataka, while the extent of surplus land identified under the ULC Act was around 29,889.17 hectares, the land acquired was only 729.32 hectares according to one reckoning made in the mid-Eighties. Another informal study made in the Seventies had revealed that the effective enforcement of the ULC Act would have yielded nearly 80 hectares within the heart of the Bangalore itself. But all this remained sterile academic

exercises and that speaks volumes for the clout wielded by the landed gentry in the urban areas. But while giving exemption under the Act, the floodgates for arbitrariness and even corruption were opened as the result of the Centre's stand that invoking the clauses of exemption for group housing purposes was legally valid.

Urban Development Minister Chowda Reddy, who revealed the Government's intention to frame the guidelines and enhance developmental charges, has stated that the Government has embarked on this course in view of the tremendous demand for a change in land use. But it would be advisable for the Minister to tread cautiously and his overriding priority should be to explore to what extent such exemption can be given to serve the larger public interest without causing an adverse impact on the environment. The Government should be guided by the same criterion while finalising the formula to share the surplus land between the Government and the owner on a 70:30 basis. Any attempt to review the ULC Act should be characterised by pragmatism and judiciousness in view of the unsatiable hunger for land caused by the growth of urban areas and rise in population.

Entire South Blacked Out By Major Power Failure

93AS06061 Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
18 Feb 93 pp 1, 12

[Article: "Blackout in Whole of South"]

[Text] Madras—the entire south-Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry was plunged into darkness on Wednesday due to sudden tripping of the Ramagundam grid in Andhra Pradesh at 9.20 p.m.

TNEB chairman N. Hari Bhaskar told *INDIAN EXPRESS* that initially, three units of 500 MW each tripped at Ramagundam. Within minutes, two units of 200 MW each also tripped, resulting in a total failure of 1,900 MWs. The frequency dipped to 47.5 Hz against a permissible minimum of 48.5 Hz.

This resulted in heavy withdrawal of power, resulting in tripping in the neighbouring grids also. By then, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka started drawing 750 MW each against a permissible level of about 120 to 130 MWs causing a further fall in frequency. Neyveli-I (300 MW), Neyveli-II (900 MW), Mettur (840 MW) AND Tuticorin (630 MW) failed.

A similar failure had occurred on Jan 3, this year, when the four states had been steeped in darkness for several hours.

Mr. Hari Bhaskar said that fortunately, this time, the Ennore Thermal station was isolated and saved from breaking down completely. It retained about 100 MW of power. This enabled the Board to restore power for essential services like hospitals, newspapers and the railways.

TNEB chief engineer K. Ramaswamy said power in Kerala was first restored and hydro stations in Tamil Nadu were switched on. Later, at about 11.05 p.m., Kerala and the hydro stations in Tamil Nadu were connected. This allowed the Board to restore supply upto Singarapet. Availability of the Ennore grid helped in restoring power upto Arani.

Attempts to restore the Kalpakkam station immediately proved futile, as there is a technical problem with the reactor. The Kalpakkam station cannot be restored before the shutoff was more than 30 minutes, it is learnt.

At about 11.45 p.m., the feeders were normalised and supply to many parts of the City were restored by about 12 midnight. Mofussil areas, however, had to wait for longer. Electricity Board staff were working at top gear to restore normalcy.

Against a total requirement of 3,000 MW, for the state, the TNEB had restored 800 MW by 1.30 a.m. If Mettur, Tuticorin and Neyveli is got back, it was hoped that by 6 a.m. on Thursday, 1,500 MW would be restored.

Most train services were affected and suffered delay for several hours. Several trains were running on low voltage while others were detained at certain points.

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